LORD STRATHCONA

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE

BECKLES WILLSON

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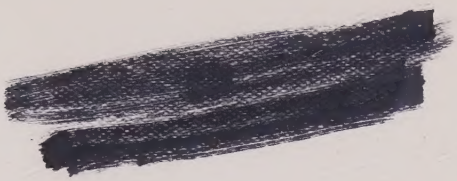

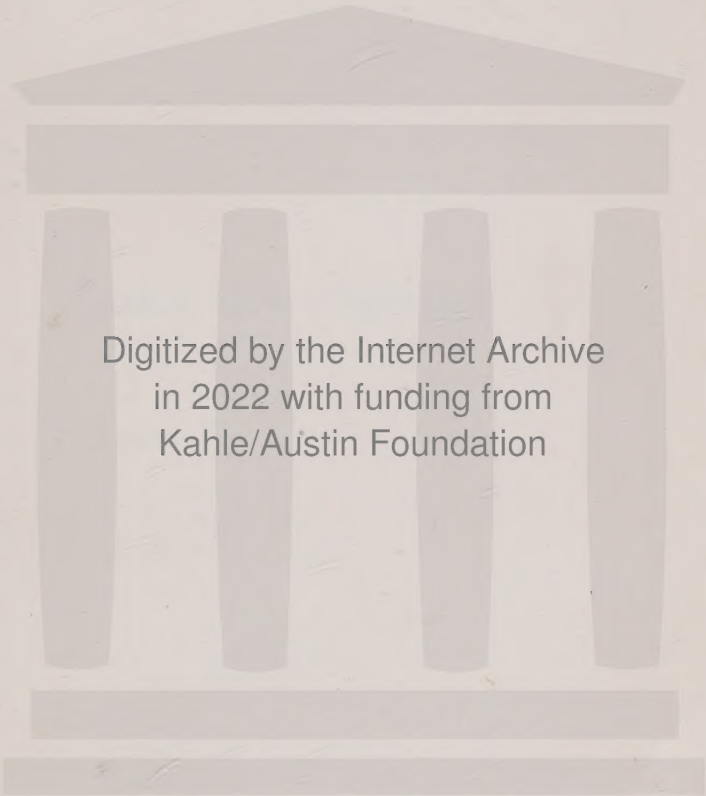
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LORD STRATHCONA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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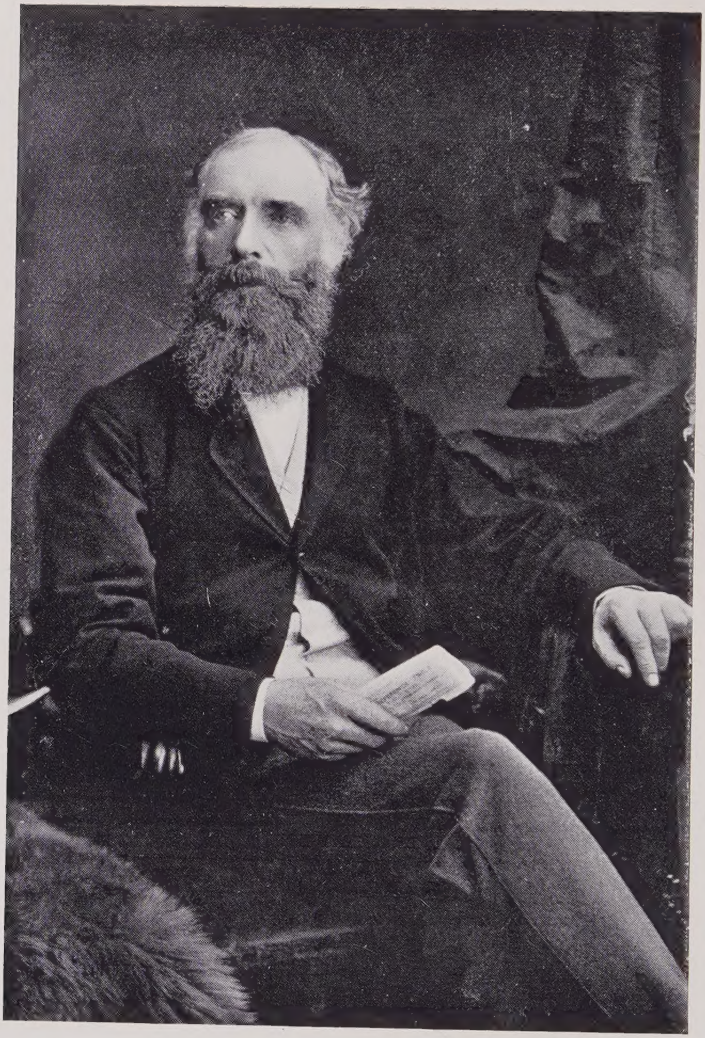

LORD STRATHCONA AND MOUNT ROYAL

(DONALD ALEXANDER SMITH)

ÆTAT 50

LORD STRATHCONA

THE STORY OF HIS LIFE

BY

BECKLES WILLSON

WITH FOREWORDS BY

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL, K.T., P.C.

AND

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN, P.C., G.C.M.G.

"THERE IS NO SECRET—THE RECIPE FOR SUCCESS IS KNOWN TO AND IS WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL, IT IS—PERSEVERANCE"

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON
1902

FOREWORDS

BY THE DUKE OF ARGYLL
AND
THE EARL OF ABERDEEN

LORD STRATHCONA'S career has been so conspicuous and noteworthy, that it should be brought in its entirety to the knowledge of the public. I do not think there is any other civilian now alive who has been able to do so much practical good to the Empire before filling an official position.

Since he has taken office all our fellow-citizens have been able to recognise his patriotic sacrifices and the noble example he has given.

His life should nerve every young man to effort, to work in honesty and hope, and to feel that he also may become a power affecting for good the destinies of peoples.

ARGYLL

KENSINGTON PALACE, *May 9th, 1902*

This book is intended to meet an increasingly felt want.

Everybody knows that Lord Strathcona occupies a notable and distinguished position; but of the career

which has led up to this position there is but little knowledge of any definite and widespread kind. Sufficient however has been gleaned to awaken a desire for more. It is the aim therefore of the following pages to supply some information regarding the earlier portion of a career which must undoubtedly possess many features of public interest.

The book does not, I take it, profess to be a biography in the strict sense of the word. Its design is rather to provide a picture which will represent some of the many stirring and significant events and achievements with which Lord Strathcona's life is associated. And if the picture is found to be in any respect incomplete (and the writer of this note does not necessarily identify himself with every expression regarding the events alluded to), such incompleteness is largely due to the fact that Lord Strathcona has always shown a reticence regarding his personal experiences, and a dislike to recording his own performances.

Such a disposition, of course, adds to the value and appreciation of what can be set forth, and this volume will assuredly be found to evoke the stimulating admiration which is prompted by the contemplation of successful perseverance and energy, together with the generous manifestation of patriotism and zeal for the public welfare.

ABERDEEN

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

IT has not been a simple task to compile even so scanty a record of a notable career as is contained in the following pages. Lord Strathcona's unconquerable modesty and his well-known aversion to publicity have strewn his biographer's path with obstacles.

But admiring that career as I did, and believing, too, that the main facts of it should be in the possession of the public during his lordship's lifetime, I chose to persevere. To the many of his friends who have assisted me I acknowledge here my obligation.

May, 1902

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(*From photo by Norman*)

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LORD STRATHCONA

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD IN SCOTLAND

WHEN the couriers of the Prince Regent flew through the Scottish Highlands with tidings of the great Battle of Waterloo, there was neither village nor hamlet where the bulletins of killed and wounded were not awaited with a personal anxiety. One may well go farther and say there was no stirring event in any part of the empire—a siege in Bengal, a skirmish on Lake Erie, a brush with savages in New Caledonia or Van Diemen's Land—which did not have a direct concern for the gentry and peasantry of the extreme northern half of this kingdom, and particularly of Morayshire.

Morayshire, whose name has long since vanished from the map,* sent of her best to the army, but not to the army alone. For fifty years—ever since the building of the roads—the human migration had

* Now known as the county of Elgin.

been going on. You could scarcely find a single family without a toiling relation in England or Ireland, in India, America, Canada, and the distant parts of the empire and the earth.*

The royal messenger, dashing along westward from Aberdeen, shouting lustily his news of the overthrow of the mighty Corsican, may perchance have overtaken on the high road between Archieston and Grantown a fellow-countryman, tall and alert, with a characterful face, whose name was Alexander Smith.† Alexander, going out from his native village to make his way in the world, ready for any honest venture, whether for fighting or farming or trading, was of the type of Scotsmen who have made the British Empire what it is to-day.

Fate, however, had other things in store for

* "Our parish," writes Rev. Dr. Forsyth, the present minister of Abernethy, "has continued to give some of its best blood to other lands. We have sent bankers to England, farmers to Ireland, and parsons to every county in the Highlands. We have sent settlers to Canada and the United States, shepherds to Fiji, stock-keepers to New Zealand, gold-diggers to Australia, diamond merchants to Africa, doctors to the Army and Navy, and soldiers to fight our cause in all parts of the world."

† The Smiths were Highlanders long settled in the parish of Knockando, and there is constant mention of them in all the old records. One George Smith was out in the '45, and was famous for his strength and courage. He afterwards served with Clive in India.

Alexander Smith than fighting in Flanders. It led him no further than Grantown, where, soon after he set up in business, he met and won a Miss Barbara Stewart (or Stuart), of the manor of "Leth-na-Coyle," in the neighbouring parish of Abernethy.

The Stewarts were considerable folk in the countryside. The young lady's particular family is said to have held Leth-na-Coyle (now called Lainchoil) for three hundred years.* Among Miss Stewart's kinsfolk, too, were the Grants, after whom Grantown was named. By Sir Archibald Grant the town of Archieston had been founded half a century before. The match was consequently a most advantageous one for the aspiring young merchant.

Soon after their marriage Alexander Smith removed with his bride to the town of Forres, where two sons were duly born. The elder was christened John Stewart, after a famous uncle, of whom we shall have occasion later to speak. The younger, destined to be the future financier, statesman, and philanthropist, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, first saw the light August 6th, 1820, the year in

* Donald and John were the hereditary family names. In 1739 there was a John who was an elder of the Church. His son John married Marjorie Stewart, of Lynchurn, who died a centenarian at Grantown in 1830. Their son Donald married Janet, younger daughter of Robert Grant, of Cromdale, and had three sons, John, Robert, and Peter, and two daughters, Barbara and Marjorie, who survived till 1844.

which the light passed for ever away from the poor old monarch, George III., and which witnessed George IV.'s accession.

The birthplace of Lord Strathcona is still standing, being at the west end of Forres and facing the Burn of Mosset. It is now occupied by a poor order of tenant, but at the time of his birth was suitable for the residence of a middle-class family.

If this part of Elgin is one of the most interesting districts of the Highlands, Forres is certainly the most interesting spot in the shire. It has been rendered classic ground by Shakespeare, in his tragedy of *Macbeth*. Time had been when Forres, which when Donald Alexander Smith was born contained about 3,500 souls, was a place of greater importance than the town of Elgin. It is not known when it became a royal burgh, all the older charters having been lost; but in the verse of one of Scotia's minstrels:—

> "Forres, in the days of yore,
> A name 'mang Scotia's cities bore,
> And there her Judges o'er and o'er
> Did Scotland's laws dispense;
> And there the monarchs of the land
> In former days held high command,
> And ancient architects had planned,
> By rules of art in order grand
> The royal residence."

One of the local legends which early appealed to

little Donald Smith was that relating to King Duffus, the son of Malcolm, who is said to have been murdered in the castle at Forres by Donald, the governor, in the year 967. There is a curious story that the body of Donald's victim was hidden under the bridge of Kinloss, and that till it was found the sun did not shine. Many years after he had put a thousand leagues of sea between him and Kinloss Bridge the young fur-trader, seeing for the first time the dead body of an Indian hardly less rudely clad than the early natives of the Highlands, recalled vividly this enthralling countryside legend.

It was at Forres that King Duncan held his court, and it is at Forres that Shakespeare has fixed the greater part of the action of *Macbeth*. Macbeth and Banquo, on their way to the camp, meet the weird sisters on the Hard Muir, in the adjacent parish of Dyke, and the memorable speech is uttered:

> "How far is it called to Forres? What are these
> So withered and so wild in their attire,
> That look not like the inhabitants o' earth
> But yet are on't?"

Donald's mother had no intention that he should tread the somewhat uphill path his father had trod. She may have recalled the words which Dr. Samuel Johnson had used to Boswell during his journey through Morayshire fifty years before: "Every man

who comes into the world has need of friends. If he has to get them for himself, half his life is spent before his merit is known. Relations are a man's ready friends." With such kinsmen as John and Donald boasted, therefore, she determined to give them a proper schooling which would fit them to deserve Fortune's favour and that of the family. The Smiths were by no means greatly blessed with this world's goods; education at a private school was expensive, and the question how to obtain what she sought was not easy. Happily there was a resource lately established. One Jonathan Anderson, a native of Forres, who, like many of his neighbours, had wandered afar in pursuit of wealth and met with success, made over, some years before Donald's birth, to the magistrates and town council the lands of Cowlairs, now forming part of the city of Glasgow, for the purpose of creating a school and paying a teacher at Forres. His intention was that the children of necessitous parents in his native parish and those of Raffard and Kinloss should be instructed in reading, English, writing, arithmetic, and such branches of education as the provost, magistrates, and town council should think proper. The building, in the Grecian style, was erected in 1824, and Donald became one of the earliest pupils. His youthful traits at that time were those appropriate to his later character. A fellow-pupil who remem-

bers him describes him as of a shy, amiable disposition, but with a fund of sturdy resolution and even hardihood when occasion demanded it. When Donald was nine years the Findhorn and the Spey broke their boundaries and flooded the country. Many of the peasant folk with their families came into Forres to seek relief, and among them the parents of one of Donald's childish playmates who was drowned. After school Donald called on the bereaved family, and "with a gravity far beyond his years condoled with them, and on leaving begged they would accept a slight token in memory of his friend. He then handed over all his pocket-money, amounting to a shilling and some odd coppers." Thus was the child father to the man.

The master of this institution of learning professed to be a great Shakespearian scholar, and was especially fond of quoting from *Macbeth*. His father had met Dr. Johnson on his Scottish itinerary, and naturally cherished a large number of anecdotes of that illustrious man, which he bequeathed to his descendant. As these were retailed to the school on all possible occasions, the pupils might have been forgiven for sometimes confusing the itinerant lexicographer with the royal murderer, as was actually done on one occasion by a boy named Robertson.

The lads of the school were allowed as a great treat to ascend the Nelson tower, and Robertson,

one of the biggest boys at Anderson's, who did so for the first time, was greatly struck by the view.

"Look!" he cried, "yonder is where Dr. Johnson killed Banquo."

This exhibition of crass ignorance was generally received in silence, prompted by a wholesome dread of Robertson's temper. But it was more than Donald could stand; he laughed Robertson to scorn, who became incensed, and threatened to "thrash both the Smith boys with one hand." Donald stood his ground manfully, as he afterwards stood it in fur-trading camp and the halls of legislation, and only the timely appearance of the master on the scene prevented a fierce combat and put an end to the incident. Robertson afterwards perished in the Crimea.

The holidays were spent at Findhorn or Abernethy, and these times Donald and his brother long looked back upon with pleasure. Mrs. Smith continued to receive occasional letters from her brother, John Stewart, the daring fur-trader, who now began to speak of returning home from the distant wilds of the North American continent.

It is hardly surprising that Stewart's career should have a peculiar attraction not merely for Donald and his brother, but for the entire youth of Forres and Abernethy. Other relations—Smiths, Stewarts, and Grants—were scattered about the world-wide domain of the new king, William IV., doing and daring,

farming and digging, exploring and peopling an empire; but, to Donald at least, his uncle John's career was the most brilliant and seductive of all.* Many and many a time did the Smith family, now increased by the birth of a sister, Jane, discuss the achievements of the heroic pioneer of New Caledonia, after whom the names of Stewart Lake and Stewart River have been bestowed.

The fact that he was said to bear a striking physical resemblance to his uncle did not diminish this interest. John Stewart had early in the century left Grantown for Montreal, and taken service with the North-West Company, of which famous body of fur-traders we may read in Washington Irving's romantic narrative, *Astoria*. Another relation, Cuthbert Grant, had preceded him, and doubtless on his advice, John Stewart had gone out to the distant and unknown regions

* John Stewart accompanied Simon Fraser, the discoverer of the Fraser River, to the Pacific in 1808, and was present during the Astoria troubles of 1813. When the two companies amalgamated in 1821 he remained in the country, and during his nephew Donald Smith's boyhood was Chief Factor at Lesser Slave Lake. He died at Springfield House, Forres, in 1847, having directed in his will that he should be "interred in the tomb of his ancestors in the parish churchyard of Abernethy, south-east corner of the church."

As for Lord Strathcona's other maternal uncle, Peter, he went into the army, and was for some years Fort Major at Belfast, Ireland.

John Stewart married while in North America and had two sons, Donald and John, who died comparatively young. The former was a lieutenant in H.M. 78th Regiment of Highlanders, and took part in the Crimean War.

west of the Rockies.* Those were the days of intense and bloody rivalry between the Hudson Bay Company and the intruding North-Westers, and the Stewarts, the Grants, and other of young Smith's kinsmen were in the thick of the action. Many years afterwards Donald himself, addressing on a memorable occasion an excited body of half-breed insurgents in the Canadian North-West, said :—

"Though personally unknown to you, I am as much interested in the welfare of this country as others you know here. On both sides I have a number of relations in this land, not merely Scotch cousins, but blood relations. Hence, though I am myself a Scotchman, you will not be surprised that I should feel a deep personal interest in this great country and its inhabitants."

But although the lad was dazzled by his uncle's

* John Stewart was not the only fur-trader of the trio of Donald's uncles. Robert was also in the service of the North-West Company, and soon became celebrated for his courage and ability. His death was very tragic. One day sailing down the Columbia River his canoe was upset, and he and his three companions were flung into the water. A temporary refuge was furnished by a rock, but Stewart was the only swimmer of the four, and he was therefore the only one they could turn to for assistance. "He bade them be of good cheer—that if God permitted he would save them. Then taking one of them on his back, he struck out for the shore." His enterprise was successful, so far as the first and second man were concerned; but his further efforts to save the third man cost him his life. His strength had ebbed, and he and his companion he bore sank down in the mighty rush of waters and were never heard of again.

career, Mrs. Smith was very far from being reassured by the accounts which reached her of the life and prospects which might await her son in the North-West. In her heart of hearts she looked higher than a fur-trader's career for her sons: she wished to see John a physician and Donald a lawyer. And as both showed mental aptitude, it seemed as if, in spite of the secret longing of the one to be a soldier and the other to be a rich fur-trader, the maternal designs would attain fulfilment. For in course of time John was sent to Aberdeen to study medicine, and the subject of this memoir entered the office of Mr. Robert Watson, the Town Clerk of Forres.

It soon became evident, however, that while he applied himself rigidly to study, her younger son's heart was not in Hume and Dalrymple: the chances at the law were few, and he himself urged a calling in which he could find scope for his talents and his aspirations.

At this time there resided in Manchester, where they had achieved great wealth and were highly esteemed for their personal characters, a family of merchants named Grant, cousins of the Smith family.*

* The story of the Grants of Manchester is a most romantic one. William Grant, the elder, occupied the farm of "The Haugh" at Elchies, of Knockando; adjoining that was his first cousin, Alexander Smith, Lord Strathcona's father. Grant was engaged in the precarious trade of "droving," that is, buying cattle in the country and taking them south for sale. The years 1782–3 were notably bad

Some few years after Donald had made up his mind about his future sphere of labour, a friend of the rising young London novelist, Charles Dickens, took him to Manchester, where he made the acquaintance of these two warm-hearted men. Under the name of the "Cheeryble brothers" Dickens has given them to the world in his novel of *Nicholas Nickleby*.

Mr. Smith wrote to the elder of these Grants about his son Donald, saying he was not content to remain in Scotland (how very few young Scotsmen are!) and craving his advice. The result was a reply, that if the young man would accept a stool in their office he was welcome, and zeal and industry might lead to profitable advancement.

Donald Smith was eighteen years old when he had thus to choose a calling for life. It is not much in doubt which of the two offers he would have accepted, had not an event happened which com-

seasons: he had gone south with a drove, but failed to sell at Falkirk. Pressing on across the Border into Lancashire, he found no market, and footsore and weary, passed the night with his son William on top of a high hill. In the morning he sprang up, and overlooking the fair valley of the Irwell bathed in sunshine, cried out, "Ah, this is a paradise! Here I would like to have my home." Vain as the wish seemed to this poor Highlander, a stranger in a strange yet beautiful land, yet it was to prove true. In this very spot he and his family settled, and by honest industry built up a huge business, that ranked them amongst the merchant princes of Manchester.

LORD STRATHCONA'S BIRTHPLACE, FORRES

pletely overturned his mother's plans for him and rendered a decision in another direction altogether irresistible. His uncle, John Stewart, the redoubtable fur-trader, returned to Forres, and through his influence came the offer of a junior clerkship in the service of the great Hudson's Bay Company.

Thus it came about that in his eighteenth year, before the fair young Queen Victoria had been many months on the throne, Donald Smith took an affectionate farewell of his parents, whom he was never to see again, gripped his uncle's hand, and sailed away from Scotland for the Canadas. Mr. Smith, his father, was then living at Archieston, not in very robust health, and a dozen years later he died. His widow and daughter remained in Archieston for many years. While still in her prime Mrs. Smith's eyesight failed her: but to the last her son's letters were amongst the chief pleasures of her life. Although at that time even she could not foresee her boy's future renown, it was a saying of hers long remembered in the district, "They'll all be proud of my Donald yet."

It is worth while our pausing a moment here to take note of a curious omen.

Was it not of significance to other than the superstitious that the patron saint of Donald's native town should be St. Lawrence?

For it was to the River of St. Lawrence that

the ship was bearing away an obscure youth, who was destined to spend many years on and in the immediate neighbourhood of Laurentian shores. He was destined also to return no longer obscure. Although his real life-work was but just beginning at the period of his first return, Donald Smith had already been admitted into the councils of the wisest and most eminent in his adopted land.

NOTE

Lord Strathcona's kinsman, William Grant, one of the originals of Dickens's "Cheeryble brothers," once wrote a letter to a friend, which gives some very interesting particulars of their beginnings in Manchester. "My father," he says, "was a dealer in cattle and lost his property in the year 1783. He got a letter of introduction to Mr. Arkwright (afterwards Sir Richard and owner of one of the only two mills in Manchester), and came by way of Skipton to Manchester, accompanied by me. . . . We called upon Mr. Arkwright, but he had so many applications at the time he could not employ him. My father then applied to a Mr. Dinwiddie, a Scotch gentleman, who knew him in his prosperity, and who was a printer and manufacturer near Bury. He agreed to give my father employment, and placed my brother James and me in situations where we had an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge both of manufacturing and printing (cotton); and offered me a partnership when I had completed my apprenticeship. I declined this offer, and commenced business for myself on a small scale, assisted

by my brothers John, Daniel, and Charles." Success attended them, and they rose to great wealth and influence. "In 1818 we purchased Springside, and in 1827 we purchased the Park estate and erected a monument to commemorate my father's first visit to this valley, and on the very spot where he and I stood admiring the beautiful scenery below." Mr. Grant adds, "We attribute much of our prosperity, under Divine Providence, to the good example and good counsel of our worthy parents."

Indeed, their mother, Mrs. Grant, née Mackenzie, was a woman of rare character and piety, as was her sister, Lord Strathcona's grandmother. Does not every reader recall the description given by Dickens of the birthday festival of the "Brothers" to their confidential clerk, Tim Linkinwater? "Brother Charles, my dear fellow, my dear fellow, there is another association connected with this day which must never be forgotten by you and me. This day, which brought into the world a most faithful and excellent and exemplary fellow, took from it the kindest and very best of parents—the very best of parents to us both. I wish that she could have seen us both in our prosperity and shared it, and had the happiness of knowing how dearly we loved her in it, as we did when we were poor boys—but that was not to be. My dear brother —*The Memory of our Mother.*" Rev. Mr. Elliot says that "as a matter of fact that mother's word or wish, to the end of her days, was the law of her sons."

CHAPTER II

FUR-TRADING IN LABRADOR

"WHEN I went to Canada," Lord Strathcona once said, many years afterwards, "I took my first sea voyage; and it is interesting, by way of comparison, to state that it took between forty and fifty days, and that the clipper ship in which I sailed, of 800 tons or thereabouts, was a considerable vessel in those days—the largest boat of this kind being about 1,000 tons."

Conditions of transatlantic travel have indeed altered. Fifty years later he was to leave London, spend a week in Montreal, and be back again twenty-one days from the time of his departure.

The arrival of the young Morayshire adventurer in Canada was coincident with a time of great political turbulence and uncertainty. The rebellion of 1837, instigated in Lower Canada by certain French-speaking malcontents led by the famous Papineau, had just been quelled, but disaffection still threatened both in Upper and Lower Canada, as the provinces of Ontario and Quebec were then named. The reconstructive genius of Lord Durham had yet to

bring good out of evil, albeit at the expense of his lordship's own political fortunes. Lower Canada had then a population of barely 200,000, while Montreal, its chief city, boasted only some 35,000 souls.* It has now ten times that number.

It is hardly necessary to go into the causes which led to the outbreak, except to observe that they were connected with the demand for an elective Upper House and a responsible Executive, which Lord John Russell refused to grant. His bill authorising the Governor-General to help himself out of the Provincial Treasury without consulting the Assembly supplied the spark to the tinder. The French-Canadian leader of the malcontents arose and appealed to the arbitrament of the sword. Montreal became the refuge for the loyalists, who fled thither from all directions. Sir John Colborne attacked the rebels gathered at St. Charles, St. Eustache, and St. Benoit, and they fled before him. Martial law

* In 1837 there was no Dominion of Canada. British North America consisted of what are now the provinces of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, and Newfoundland. The country west of Ontario, now the provinces of Manitoba, the North-West Territories of British Columbia, and the territory adjoining Hudson's Bay, was under control of the great company of that name, which received its charter in 1670. The only inhabitants of this western country were the officers of the Company, the trappers, and the Indians. All the provinces were separated districts, and they treated each other as independent communities. The population of British North America numbered about 1,200,000.

was proclaimed; and when Donald Smith landed at Montreal, Lower Canada was in the hands of the soldiery. The constitution of 1791 was suspended. Lord Durham had arrived on the scene in May as Governor-General and also as special commissioner, with power to settle disputes and to arrange for the effective working of representative government in the two Canadas. All the world knows now how hard his task was and how much harder it was made for him by the Imperial Government. After a few brief months of administration and investigation, he angrily resigned and returned home. His departure was the signal for a new uprising. Mr. Smith long remembered the new cry that was borne in the air from remote districts —the cry for a Canadian Republic.

In November one Robert Nelson openly proclaimed the Republic of Canada, but prudently retired, after a skirmish or two with the militia, to join their American sympathisers across the border. Elsewhere there was burning and bloodshed: the gaols were filled with rebels, many were tried, convicted, and executed for treason. But the rebellion was crushed.*

* "No one travelling through Ontario and the other provinces to-day could imagine the state of things that existed in 1837. It seems almost incredible. Everything is made so easy for emigrants now—the travelling is comfortable, the voyage is short, the food is better than many of them get at home.

"In 1837 the only incorporated city in Ontario was Toronto, which

Perhaps had Donald Smith emigrated as a political rather than a mercantile adventurer, he might be thought to have arrived in the Canadas at a propitious moment. But indeed his lot was to be far away from the metropolis: he was as yet to have no part either as spectator or participator in the growth of polity or material which was to make and mark the colony during the next dozen years or so. But it is fitting, before we dwell on the causes which operated to exclude him from the busy haunts of men, briefly to refer to the remarkable trading body into whose hands he had placed his fortunes.

The Hudson's Bay Company! Is there not a magic in the name? What does it not conjure up

at that time had a population of from 13,000 to 14,000 people. In Lower Canada, Quebec at that time was a more important town in many ways than Montreal. It was at the head of navigation, as the shallows in Lake St. Peter, on the St. Lawrence, had not then been dredged, and it was the entrepôt of a greater share of the St. Lawrence trade than it has now. A few ocean vessels of light draught went up to Montreal, but much of the merchandise for that city was transhipped at Quebec into other vessels.

"The social condition of the people was naturally not of a high standard. Their work was hard, their mode of living simple, their houses large log-huts, and they had to go long distances to sell their produce and to buy new supplies. This, of course, refers largely to the country districts, or backwoods, as they were called in those days. In the towns and villages there was plenty of intercourse; and judging from my own early experiences, life in the centres of population was pleasant and attractive, and the Canadians were as generous in their hospitality as they are known to be to-day." —*Lecture delivered by Lord Strathcona at Oxford, July 31st*, 1899.

of frontier battles — what arctic sea-fights — what deeds of endurance! What fantastic conclaves in the wilderness with red-skinned savages—what peril of flood—what pain of portage!

"Imagine," wrote a popular author in Donald A. Smith's early manhood, "an immense extent of country, many hundreds of miles broad, and many hundred miles long, covered with dense forests, expanded lakes, broad rivers, wide prairies, swamps, and mighty mountains, and all in a state of primeval simplicity—undefaced by the axe of civilised man, and untenanted by aught save great roving hordes of Red Indians and myriads of wild animals. Imagine amidst this wilderness a number of small squares, each enclosing half a dozen wooden houses and about a dozen men, and between each of these establishments a space of forest varying from fifty to three hundred miles in length, and you will have a pretty good idea of the Hudson's Bay Company's Territories, and of the number of and distance between their forts. The idea, however, may be still more correctly obtained by imagining populous Great Britain converted into a wilderness and planted in the middle of Rupert's Land. The Company in that case would build *three* forts in it—one at the Land's End, one in Wales, and one in the Highlands—so that in Britain there would be but three hamlets with a population of some thirty men, half

a dozen women, and a few children! The Company's posts extend, with these intervals between, from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean, and from within the Arctic Circle to the northern boundaries of the United States."*

The Governor of this vast domain, Sir George Simpson, variously dubbed the "King of the Fur Trade" and the "Emperor of the Plains," resided at Lachine, near Montreal. Not unreasonably was he regarded by young Donald Smith with considerable awe.

But Simpson, for all his boundless power and autocratic manners, had been twenty years before a clerk in the London office of the Company. Having attracted the attention of Lord Selkirk's relation, Andrew Colville, he was sent out to Rupert's Land on the union of the rival fur companies in 1821, and unexpectedly, but as events proved not unwisely, chosen resident Governor. Short of stature, but of a commanding and alert disposition, he soon made himself a real power throughout this vast region. He became a famous traveller in his dominions, and early in the Queen's reign undertook what proved to be a successful voyage round the world, of which he has left a record.

Simpson consulted the interests of the Company, and decided that the new recruit should be attached

* R. M. Ballantyne.

to the newly established Labrador department. Accordingly to Labrador, the bleakest corner of the earth, Donald was sent.

The huge peninsula which in 1838 went by the name of Labrador — although the designation is strictly proper only to the north-east portion — occupies an area between the Atlantic and Hudson's Bay. The Gulf of St. Lawrence, the North Atlantic, Hudson's Straits, and Hudson's Bay bound it on three sides, while the south-western limits may roughly be said to be Rupert's River, the Mistassini, and Betsiamites River. The reader may be further informed that the area of this mighty region is about 420,000 square miles, or equal to the British Isles, France, and Prussia together.

Some few years before Mr. Smith's arrival the attention of the Company had been directed to this bleak district as a possible field of lucrative enterprise. The Moravian missionaries among the Eskimos had issued a pamphlet in which, after describing the state of the natives, it was stated that the furs of the fox, mink, and marten were to be obtained. Acting on this hint, the Company sent overland from Moose Factory,* and in 1831 took possession of a district formerly included in its ancient charter. At first the expense of maintaining posts in Labrador hardly seemed to be warranted by

* To an adjacent post Lord Strathcona, after 1852, became attached.

results, and the project by no means commended itself to many of the partners. But Governor Simpson was resolved to persevere, and despatched several hardy factors to open up the country. One Erlandson and his party, who traversed the country in 1834, do not appear to have been impressed with the chances of trade, and Erlandson's successor, McLean, thought even less favourably of the country, judging by the description he has left of it. For weeks with several Scotch boatmen, Indian guides and dogs, in the midst of the bitterest cold and snowfall, he journeyed to Michigoma Lake, but provisions failing, they were brought almost to extremity before spring. From Fort Chimo, McLean fitted out an expedition to explore the coast "with the view of ascertaining the capabilities of that quarter for the extension of the business." The party was absent about a month, and their report was, he tells us, entirely unfavourable :—

"The navigation of the coast is exceedingly dangerous, from the continual presence of ice and the extraordinary force of the currents. While the coast proved so inaccessible, the interior of the country wears a still more dreary and sterile aspect; not a tree, nor shrub, nor plant of any kind is to be seen, save the lichens that cover the rocks and a few willows."

Nevertheless, in the course of the summer several

Eskimos arrived from the westward with a considerable quantity of fox skins—the only fur the district appeared to yield. Some of these wretched creatures had spent nearly two years in making the journey, being obliged to hunt or fish for their living as they travelled. As a reward for all their toil and hardships, they obtained, we are told, "a little tobacco and a few strings of beads, very few having the means of procuring guns and ammunition."

It was into such surroundings and to such prospects that the future Governor of the Company was now to be introduced.

"In September," writes McLean, "I was gratified by the arrival of despatches from Canada by a young clerk appointed to the district. By him we received the first intelligence of the stirring events that had taken place in the colonies during the preceding year." The accounts of the triumphs of his countrymen's arms over French treachery and Yankee hatred, he goes on to tell, diverted his thoughts from the melancholy subject of his wife's death, which had recently taken place.

Donald came ultimately to be stationed at Hamilton Inlet, where the Company then had two posts. What were the round of his daily duties at North-West River, at Rigoulette, and elsewhere in those thirteen years the future peer-millionaire spent in the Company's service in Labrador, and the many years

afterwards on the inhospitable shores of Hudson's Bay? They differed in few, if any, respects from those still performed by the clerks and traders in the Canadian fur trade. He and his comrades at the post spent most of their time trading in furs with the Indians — particularly the Mountaineers and the Nascopies. There was a certain amount of office work to be done; there was also canoeing, boating, fishing, and shooting— Ballantyne has added, "wishing and skylarking." Some other occupation was necessary, and Donald Smith found it in reading and writing. What was said of another Hudson's Bay man was true of him. With a winter of eight months' duration and a temperature often fifty degrees below zero, time would otherwise have hung heavily upon his hands. "With a view to lighten it a little he wrote long letters home to his mother in Scotland—necessarily long, because of the interval between the mails. Whenever he felt a touch of home-sickness he got out his sheets of 'Imperial' paper and 'entered into spiritual intercourse with home.'" There can be no doubt that to this practice of writing long letters, and to his regular devotion to reading while the other clerks were "skylarking," Lord Strathcona owes his after facility of composition and his unusually ordered habits of mind.

The great feature and the most important event in

the year was the arrival of the Labrador post. There is now probably no other country in the world where there exists a longer or more dangerous postal route for men and dogs—two thousand miles of land-travel from Quebec to Ungava in the depth of winter, which, in these arctic latitudes, lasts from December to June. And yet this route in its various stages has actually been traversed on foot and in dog-sleds—not once, but several times—by Lord Strathcona. By this annual or semi-annual post came the letters from home—letters from his father, mother, and sister, telling him of the news in Forres and the Morayshire countryside; of the death of his uncle, John Stewart, the fur-trader; the departure of his brother for India as a surgeon in the army,* and other tidings of his relations and school friends which the young exile wished to know. The Labrador post began at Bersimis, some hundred and fifty miles below Quebec; from thence the post-man, on snow-shoes and komatik, proceeded to Mingan, and from this Company post near the

* John Stuart Smith was educated at Aberdeen, and later at the University of Edinburgh, where he took his M.D. degree, and was admitted a licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1839. In the same year he entered the service of the Army Medical Department, in which he attained his surgeon majority in 1859. He served twice in India and in the first Chinese War, being present at the taking of Canton, and also in New Zealand during the Maori War. For the last thirty-six years of his long life he resided in Edinburgh, dying early in March, 1899.

mouth of the St. Lawrence to Eskimo Point. Here he was relieved by the mail man from Bonne Esperance, who had to retrace his steps for hundreds of miles along the most difficult parts of the coast, and so on to the end of his journey, when he hands over the mail-bag to others, who convey it on to Rigoulette. But this is by no means the end of the route. Indeed, from this station the most difficult part of the journey commences. Even to this day a factor named Ford regularly carries the mail twice during the Labrador winter, with his team of dogs and accompanied by two hardy Eskimos, from Davis Inlet across the arctic peninsula to Fort Chimo, Ungava Bay, a perilous journey over an immense icy wilderness.

Nearly the entire Labrador coast is lined with multitudes of small islands, separated by deep, narrow channels from the mainland, with here and there a bay of some extent where the islands are more widely sundered. These numberless islets and channels are too numerous and intricate to be accurately mapped. Our ordinary charts give only an approximate idea of their situation, and navigation along the whole coast is largely a matter of guess-work. It was much worse during the many years that the subject of this biographical sketch was a resident of Labrador. More than once, travelling between posts on the seaboard, he has

missed his way in a storm; safety alone lay in gaining one of the bleak islands, and there, with his Indian or Eskimo companion, making shift to pass the night until the storm should subside. On one occasion, so the writer is informed by one who formerly lived for many years in those northern regions as a fish "planter," Mr. Smith was obliged to camp out on one of the islands off Hamilton Inlet for a whole day during a mighty blizzard, and was only spared by a miracle, for another who was exposed in a similar situation not far distant on the same occasion miserably perished. Mr. Smith made a practice of always carrying a plentiful supply of warm clothing, in the shape of furs, and additional provisions with him whenever he went on his journeys, no matter how little threatening the weather, and it is probably to this prudence that he more than once owed his life.

The chief source of pride of Mr. Smith and all the officers at Rigoulette was the Company's farm, which regularly supplied the table, and which was long an amazing novelty in that region, where for centuries nothing had been supposed to grow—here at the "back door of the North Pole." Besides assisting in the superintendence of this sub-arctic farm, and in addition to the duties already mentioned, young Smith was also expected to practise the healing art amongst the natives, who were constantly

subject to illness, and in this way he acquired no inconsiderable knowledge of medicine.*

Once in his time there was a serious outbreak of scarlet fever, accompanied by diphtheria. Many of the people died, and the survivors were so alarmed by the spread of the disease and its fatal results, and were in such an abject state of fear, that they kept away from the houses in which people were known to be suffering. There is little doubt that many of the persons died from simple dread of the disease and the fright occasioned by the mortality.

Mr. Smith, being sent to visit the settlement, came upon this unhappy state of things. It was reported to him also that the family of a former employee of the Company—a Scotchman—had taken the disease at a place some twelve miles distant. Young Smith went there, and found the whole family confined in a small hut, the various members being scattered

* Half a century later, addressing the medical students of the Middlesex Hospital, in London, he described the antiseptic which was used by him in Labrador in the forties.

"It was," said he, "a primitive and somewhat rude form of treatment that was practised in those days before Lord Lister introduced his discovery. For the treatment of wounds, ulcerated sores, etc., a pulp was made by boiling the inner bark of the juniper tree. The liquor which resulted was used for washing and treating the wounds, and the bark, beaten into a plastic, pliable mass, was applied after the thorough cleaning of the wound, forming a soft cushion lending itself to every inequality of the sore. Scrupulous cleanliness was observed, and fresh material used for every application."

Albion College Library

over the floor, and, in fact, in any place where room could be found. It was nearly a counterpart of the "Black Hole" of Calcutta. The door was shut, and so were the windows, and the odour that came when the former was opened can best be left to the imagination. One of the family—a boy—had died, and his body lay in an outhouse. The first thing Mr. Smith did was to break open the window and let in the air, and then to administer some remedies. In a short time all the other members of the family recovered, and the utter helplessness and abject terror which had prevailed was changed into a feeling of hope. Not a single fatal case subsequently occurred. The disease—largely resulting from panic—had been checked by the administration of a little common sense.

Before Mr. Smith left Labrador the Eskimos had all but totally vanished from the lower coasts. They had parted in company with the polar bear, the walrus, the eiders, the geese, and the countless sea-fowl; hunter and game had alike departed for the arctic regions. Their disappearance is ascribed partly to natural causes, partly to contact with civilisation, especially in the form of stoves and consequently closed huts and no ventilation, a state which induces respiratory diseases. The hostility of the Nascopies may also have had something to do with their impending extinction. In the forties,

however, it was by no means an uncommon thing to come across a white man married to a full-blooded Eskimo woman or even Eskimo half-breeds. At Roger's Harbour was a well-known character named Cole, with an Eskimo wife and half-breed children, and there was the "President of American Island," as he was called, a man named Williams, a great stand-by of the Company in the region about Tub Harbour. He had taken possession of an island, upon which he had bestowed the above title, and had married a full-blooded Eskimo. Having no children of their own, they ultimately adopted, strange to relate, a Nascopie Indian's child.

As to these Nascopies, they are the same called Montagnais by the French, and Mountaineers by the English-speaking Canadians. The tribe is a branch of the Algonquin stock, and is the only one known to inhabit the Labrador Peninsula. They are still commonly met with at Rigoulette, but were very plentiful fifty or sixty years ago. Perhaps 6,000 Indians used to frequent the Company's posts, whereas to-day there are hardly 2,500.

On any visit paid by young Smith to an Eskimo habitation, he was obliged to bend under the low opening which served as door and circumspectly thread his way between the suspended carcases of seal or codfish and "a vessel of familiar democratic shape and use, filled with urine, in which the seal-

skins are soaked before being chewed between the teeth of the housewife, an important step in the process of making or mending sealskin boots." A great number of the Company's employees married Eskimo women, and of course the half-breed children settled about the posts. Mr. Smith was more than once called upon to render his services in the tying of the nuptial knot.

A few years ago an intelligent woman nearly seventy years of age, residing at one of the Company's stations, when informed that young "boss" Smith had "grown rich and now wore a gold crown on his head," exclaimed, "Well, well! me remember the day he married me and Isaac Diskyak at Rigoulette same like it was yesterday. Isaac he bought a ring at the Company's store to put on my finger. But me foolish when Isaac died, and trade the ring off to a Husky sailor for a plug of tobacco. And so boss Smith king now?"

"Well—no," it was explained; "not exactly king, but a baron, a great lord."

The old crone's eyes danced, but the only comment she made was:

"Well, well, p'raps he come out here and buy up all Labrador, and kick out the M'ravians!"

For, alas! she was a heathen, and bore a grudge against the good Labrador missionaries.

Once a Scotchman at the post brought out a set

of bagpipes, and when the Indians and Eskimos were foregathered at the post, struck up "The Highland Laddie," or some such air. The delight of the aborigines was immense; their faces lit up with rapture, and with open mouths and ears they drank in the eccentric sounds produced by the instrument. Old men, youths and maidens feasted on the piper's face and gestures. Afterwards a discussion arose at the factory as to whether the Eskimos were of Mongolian or Icelandic extraction.

"Hoots, mon, ye're a' wrang," broke in the impatient piper. "Did ye no see the chiels the marn whilst I was twirlin' the pipes? I've nae doot—nae doot ava—they've true Hieland bluid in their veins!"

There was an old Eskimo pilot, well known throughout the district, who rejoiced in the name of John Tooktooshnah. He was a humourist, had a single tooth in his head, which, being huge in size, V-shaped, and strongly impressed upon his lower lip, gave him a distinctive appearance. Tooktooshnah affected the airs of a great dandy, and studiously observed the latest British manner as exhibited in the H.B. officers and visitors. "He never," writes one, "*knew* anything, but '*I suppose so*,' and the term he often used was 'handy by,' meaning close to; his native place was Windy Tickle." One day Mr. Smith received a visit from old John, and upon

being asked what he could do to oblige him, he requested to purchase one of the "small port-holes" affected by Mr. —— in his eye.

"I'm afraid," said the trader, "we can't oblige you, John, but we'll order an eyeglass for you, if you like."

When Mr. —— heard of the Eskimo's request he repaired to his box, fished out another eyeglass, and in spite of the prohibition against private trading, is believed to have parted with it for a good round sum. For the next day Tooktooshnah was going swaggering along to his boat, calling general attention to his "A No. 1 Hudson's Bay little port-hole, egad, sir!"

"Eh, mon," observed a Scot, "it's an eyeglass you mean. An eyeglass, d'ye no ken?"

The civilised Eskimo surveyed him blandly through the "port-hole." "*I suppose so,*" he drawled.

The writer of these pages has often heard it told of Lord Strathcona that, during his Labrador apprenticeship, he contracted a painful affection of the eyes, and, unable to endure the malady any longer, journeyed by arduous stages to Montreal to consult an oculist. Sir George Simpson, the Governor, hearing of his expected arrival by one of his trusty couriers, met him on the outskirts of the city, when the following colloquy is alleged to have taken place:—

"Well, young man, why are you not at your post?"

"My—my eyes, sir," faltered Mr. Smith, pointing to his pair of blue goggles. "They got so very bad, I've come to see a doctor."

"And who gave you permission to leave your post?" thundered the Governor.

As it would have taken a full year to have obtained official consent to his journey, Mr. Smith was forced to reply, "No one."

"Then, sir," said the fur-trade autocrat, "if it's a question between your eyes and your service in the Hudson's Bay Company, you'll take my advice and return this instant to your post."

Although stunned by this pronouncement, it is related that the future Lord Strathcona did not hesitate. He turned then and there in his tracks and commenced a painful return journey of nearly a thousand miles to the scene of his dreary duties.

Advancement was slow. He served for thirteen long years in this inhospitable climate "with no companionship save a few employees and his own thoughts, learning the secrets of the Company, how to manage the Indians, and how to produce the best returns." But by this time the Governor had discovered his qualities—that invaluable knack of turning everything to account. "No matter," it has been heard of him, "however poor the post might

be, Donald Smith always showed a balance on the right side of the ledger." He was rewarded, first, by a chief tradership, and after ten years more, spent on the shores of Hudson's Bay, at one of the oldest of the Company's forts, there came to him in the early sixties the prize he had so long striven for.

Governor Simpson had been dead but a brief time when his successor appointed Mr. Smith a Chief Factor in the Great Fur Company. Governor Dallas himself retired; further changes were made, and one day, in 1868, it was announced throughout the service that the Governor and committee in London had chosen Mr. Smith to fill the post of chief executive officer of the Company in North America, to be stationed at Montreal.

During ten years only Mr. Smith's advancement had been comparatively rapid, and he had now completed his forty-eighth year.

NOTE

The climate of Labrador in summer is rendered almost intolerable by the plague of insects. Lady Aberdeen, in her entertaining little volume, *Through Canada with a Kodak*, describing a dinner-party at Sir Donald Smith's, says: "He told us of the terrors of the Labrador mosquitoes, and how they have vanquished men who would fly from no other enemy. He instanced one case in which a friend of his was so sensitive to their bites that he had to stop every half-hour on the march to wash away the blood from his head and face."

CHAPTER III

A DANGEROUS MISSION

MR. SMITH had risen from a mere clerkship to the highest position it was in the power of the historic Company to bestow on any of its servants in the fur trade. He could, as he himself said, look back on more than thirty years of arduous service in every capacity. He had been for more than a generation shut off in the arctic wilderness from his fellows; he had endured privations, cold, and fatigue. Many who met him at this time might rationally have conceived him as having gained the summit of his ambition and as settling down in a new position to enjoy the fruits of power in Montreal, as his famous predecessor, Sir George Simpson, had done before him.

Who therefore could have dreamt that so far from having reached its zenith, the career of "Donald Smith, the Hudson's Bay man" (as Sir John A. Macdonald came to call him), instead of ending was only just beginning? Or let us say rather that he

had completed one orbit of a life which was destined to pursue many.*

Mr. Smith had not been settled long in his new position before serious trouble began to loom up over the Company's horizon. For a number of years malcontents residing in the Company's western domains had been endeavouring to stir up an agitation which would divorce the settlement at Red River from the Company's rule and possession. From time to time during its long history the sovereign rights of the Company under its charter over the huge territory of Rupert's Land had been impugned, but that body had rallied from every onslaught. The rapid increase of population in the district known as Assiniboia had, however, clearly imperilled the continued tenure of the Company. Agitators arose in their midst; the wise and peaceful administration, as it is now known to have been, was denounced as despotic; representative institutions were demanded, and the noise occasioned by all this tumult was not long in reaching the outside

* In the course of the year 1869 a young officer of the Company writes: "I called to-day to pay my respects to Donald A. Smith, our great Moghul of the service, and was surprised to find him so affable and unassuming, with no trace of the ruggedness you would associate with the wilderness. You'd think he had spent all his life at the Court of St. James instead of Labrador, and I came away feeling I was going to be made a Chief Factor right away, instead of having to wait about fifteen years more for that promotion."

world and there creating considerable sympathy for those supposed to be the victims of an unrighteous tyranny. In Canada particularly was an ear lent to these complaints, and soon after confederation certain enterprising politicians decided that the time was now ripe to annex this disaffected north-west region, whose area was not less than that of European Russia. As events were to show, these men entirely misconceived both the agitation and the aims and purposes of the agitators.

To understand broadly the character and origin of the Red River settlement it must be borne in mind that in the early days the prairies round about were overrun by vast herds of buffalo, which had from time immemorial produced the staple article of food for the Indians. As the settlers and the servants of the Company, French and Scotch, increased and intermarried with the natives, they also took part in the buffalo hunts, large camps being organised by the half-breeds to penetrate into the interior. Feuds ensued between Indian and half-breed (or Métis), and the fact of these feuds being characterised by frequent bloodshed did not detract from the pleasure they afforded to a hardy, adventurous, somewhat excitable population, little fitted as yet for the soberer occupations of husbandman and artisan. In the midst of this population the Governor and Council of Assiniboia (as they were

styled), made up of Company officers, men of an altogether different stamp from those about them, ruled with a firm hand. At the time when Canada resolved, by an arrangement with the Company in London, upon taking the rod of authority out of the hands of these men and ruling the country herself, there were perhaps twelve thousand souls in the settlement, made up almost equally of English and Scotch and of French half-breeds, with a sprinkling of Europeans, Canadians, and Americans. To the majority of these Canada was as foreign a country as America, with whom, owing to its immediate proximity, there was much in common; although the leading spirit of the disaffected party, Dr. John Schultz—of whom we shall hear much hereafter—was a Canadian. Many of the priests who ministered to the French-speaking half-breeds were natives of Old France.

As early as the autumn of 1867 Mr. Smith perceived that it was the Dominion Government's intention to bring about the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada. Indeed, in October, Sir John A. Macdonald, the Canadian Premier, had written to a mutual friend:—

"The Hudson's Bay question must soon be settled; the rapid march of events and the increase of population on this continent will compel England and Canada to come to some arrangement respecting

that immense country. We shall ventilate the subject during the ensuing session of Parliament, which commences on the 6th of November, and shall be able to judge what the feeling of Parliament is."

Parliament, it was soon seen, was for acquiring the country. "Should we," asked the Premier, "be deterred, then, by this bugbear of a claim, which, if well founded, might be disposed of within moderate limits? If offered to the United States of America—the recent purchasers of a tract of ice adjoining—can we doubt that they would consent to pay for it an amount equal to the whole debt of Canada four times over?"

But Sir John Macdonald overlooked the fact that the Hudson's Bay Company would have refused to —even had they been permitted to—accept any offer from America, were it equal a hundred times to the debt of Canada. They were not traitors; the very emblem of the Company was the British flag.

Messrs. Cartier and Macdougall, representing the Government, sailed for England, in October, 1868, to open negotiations with the Company. An arrangement was finally effected whereby, in consideration of £300,000, the latter agreed to surrender all their interests in the North-West to the Crown, with the reservation of one-twentieth of the fertile belt and 45,000 acres adjacent to the trading posts of the Company.

But this important arrangement was concluded solely with the shareholders of the Company in London, without any reference to the officers and employees composing the fur trade, or to the population of Red River. These elements were naturally greatly perturbed over the impending transfer, but for very different reasons. The half-breeds—especially those of French origin—had long been attached to the Company, and regarded with alarm the prospect, as they put it, of being sold to Canada. The Company's officers felt aggrieved that their privileges and authority were thus to be supplanted by outsiders, without the hint of any recompense being afforded them or their being at all consulted in the matter of the transfer. Another party* clamoured for annexation to the States; while it remained for still another—which, led by an ardent and ambitious man, finally succeeded in gaining the suffrages of the half-breeds, boldly to advocate the establishment of a Republic.†

* All this was joy to the Americans. Mr. Bannatyne stated that on one occasion a gentleman of high standing came from the American side and offered Riel $50,000 in cash and $100,000 more and a position into the bargain if he would only work for annexation. To his credit Riel declined this tempting offer, but he therefore incurred the enmity of the Fenian O'Donoghue, who was furious at his companion's conduct.

† It is now known that a meeting was summoned by one William Dease, with Schultz's approbation, and was attended by over one hundred French half-breeds. Dease addressed the people, and in-

Here we have, then, the elements of the situation when, in the summer of 1869, Mr. Smith received a visit from Mr. Mactavish, the Governor of Assiniboia, who, with alarm on his face and a grievance in his bosom, had travelled thousands of miles to ascertain the truth of the terrible rumours he had heard about the transfer to Canada of Rupert's Land. Mr. Smith was too astute not to perceive that it was futile to try and set back the hands of the clock of progress. It may be that because it had not fallen to his lot to serve the Company in the Far West, and consequently had imbibed no local predilections, that he was able to look at the matter clearly and without prejudice. He had all his life proved loyal to the Company; but his loyalty and affection did not prevent him from seeing that the time had come when the situation as regarded the Company's exclusive

formed them that "the Hudson's Bay Company had sold their lands and themselves to Canada, and were to receive some £300,000 sterling. He advised them, therefore, to organise, demand the public money from the Company, and form a government of their own."

Governor Mactavish was sent for; he came and explained all he knew about this report: that certain negotiations were going on in England, but that the money mentioned was only for the Company's chartered rights and not for the people's lands.

But the Métis, naturally suspicious, disbelieved all this when they saw with their own eyes the Canadian surveyors actually advancing with their instruments.

charter had to be faced, and that the wiser and manlier course would be to make the best of what bargain it could.

And in the end he was convinced that the transfer, so far from ruining the Company, as so many predicted, would prove in the long run profitable to it. He repeated then his belief that the Company's officers would get a share of any money paid over by Canada for the surrender. Mactavish went back to Fort Garry, on the Red River, with bitterness in his heart. His health began to fail, the subsequent disturbances aggravated his illness, and when Mr. Smith saw him again at Red River he appeared a doomed man.*

The first communication Mr. Smith had with the Government at Ottawa with respect to the North-West was from Sir John Rose, on the 20th August, when it was suggested that the Hon. Joseph Howe should go there. Mr. Smith gladly concurred. "Instead," said he long afterwards, "of any difficulties being thrown in the way of officials of the Government entering the North-West, every facility was afforded them."

* He was dead in less than a year, two days after reaching England from Hudson's Bay. "Mactavish was well known to be a gentleman of the strictest integrity, a man ever actuated by the highest principles of honour, a man whose memory was enshrined in the hearts of the whole people of the Red River of his day. He would long be remembered for the good he had conferred on the country."—*Sir Donald Smith, in a speech delivered in* 1876.

Sir John Rose thanked Mr. Smith for the assistance and facilities offered by the chief executive officer of the Company to Mr. Howe. Another letter received from Mr. Macdougall evinces that the Company had done everything it could to expedite the new Governor's entry into the country.

On November 19th, 1869, the Deed of Surrender was signed in London. But long before that date, so eager were Canadians to invade and enjoy their prospective possession, that surveying parties were sent out to Red River. Mr. Macdougall, Canadian Minister of Public Works, who had been so active in promoting the transfer, was appointed Governor, and affairs generally were conducted with great imprudence and indiscretion. The result might have been foreseen—indeed was foreseen by many—great prejudice was inflamed against the new-comers,* and out of all the fierce clash of interests and excited babel of tongues at Red River there emerged the figure of the rebel and demagogue, Louis Riel.

On his way the new Governor, Macdougall, heard rumours of the probability of resistance against his authority, and on his arrival at Pembina, on the American border, on the 21st October, 1869, he

* Sir John Macdonald (says his biographer, Mr. Pope) attributed to the lack of conciliation, tact, and prudence shown by Canadian surveyors during the summer of 1869 much of the trouble which afterwards occurred.

was handed a letter warning him not to presume to enter the territory. Disregarding this letter, the Governor, accompanied by Mr. Richards, his Attorney-General, Mr. Provencher, Dr. Jakes, and members of his family, pushed on across the boundary and took up his position at the first Hudson's Bay post to await the issue of events.

In his letter at this time to the Premier he makes a great deal of Riel, as the leader of the insurgents. In reply Sir John Macdonald says: "This man Riel, who appears to be the moving spirit, is a clever fellow, and you should endeavour to retain him as an officer in your future police. If you do this promptly it will be a most convincing proof that you are not going to leave the half-breeds out of the law."

Riel was indeed a remarkable man. At an early age he had attracted the attention of Bishop Taché, who found him at the small college in St. Boniface earnestly studying Latin. In 1858 the Bishop obtained admission for the boy in the College of Montreal, where he was educated at the expense of a pious lady, Madame Masson, and it was believed he would take holy orders. Years later, in 1867, the Bishop again saw Riel in Montreal.

"I told him that, now that I had secured an education for him, he must begin to look out for himself, and endeavour to gain a respectable living.

He went to the United States, and remained there until he returned to his mother in the Red River settlement, in the autumn of 1868, when he got employment as a 'freighter' on the plains."

This was the personage who was to make more trouble for Canada than Papineau and all the Fenian raiders, and whose doings were to render for a time the Sovereign and the Imperial Cabinet uneasy.

As for poor Governor Macdougall, he was fated never to enter into his dominions. With a handful of followers Riel erected a barrier across the road into which the new Governor must make his entry into the settlement, at a point near the Roman Catholic Church at Rivière Sale. This was like lighting the firebrand. The next day three or four hundred men gathered together at the barrier with the avowed object of keeping Macdougall out at all hazards. It must be remembered that the face of the country was untraversable; that even if the incoming executive were warned of what awaited him, he would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to gain the fort by any other route. The half-breeds continued to assemble; none felt it prudent to oppose them, fearing violence; few, indeed, cared in the settlement whether Macdougall made his entry or not; certainly none were prepared to risk anything for him. Colonel Dennis, the hot-headed chief of the constabulary, who made a journey down the

Red River amongst the settlers, found that not fifty men could be collected for the purpose of escorting in the Governor. Recognising this state of affairs, the Council of Assiniboia met; they decided to advise Macdougall to remain at Pembina, as well for his own safety as for the welfare of the settlement.

"The character of the new government has been settled in Canada without our being consulted. We are prepared to accept it respectfully, to obey the laws and to become good subjects; but when you present to us the issue of a conflict with the French party, with whom we have hitherto lived in friendship, backed up as they would be by the Roman Catholic Church, which appears probable by the course at present being taken by the priests, in which conflict it is almost certain the aid of the Indians would be invoked and perhaps obtained by that party, we feel disinclined to enter upon it, and think that the Dominion should assume the responsibility of establishing amongst us what it, and it alone, has decided upon."

Macdougall and his advisers, civil and military, finding it useless after one attempt to carry out their purpose, had no alternative but to retire to American territory and await the issue of events.

On the 9th of November Governor Mactavish wrote to the secretary of the Company in London that "The position is undoubtedly serious, and the

case will require very careful handling, as any collision between parties will lead to the plain Indians being brought down on the settlement next spring, as well as disturbances over all the plain districts, which will not be put down for years, long before which the whole business of the country will have been destroyed."

On the same day that the harassed Governor at Fort Garry penned this letter, he also addressed the following to Mr. Smith :—

"*November 9th*, 1869.

"DEAR MR. SMITH,—I regret very much to have to inform you that the Honourable William Macdougall, who had been warned by the Canadian half-breeds of this settlement not to come into the colony, on his arrival at Pembina, has been within the last week driven out of the Company's establishment and forced to withdraw within the American lines by an armed party of that same portion of our population. At the same time that they sent to drive back Mr. Macdougall a party was sent here to occupy this establishment under the pretext of protecting it; and though their protection was declined, they still remain, and, it would appear, are determined to go to greater lengths than they have yet done; and the nominal leaders of the movement have invited delegates from the other portions of the population to meet them on the 16th inst. to consider the condition of the country, as well as to express their views as to the form of government to be adopted."

The issue did not appear less remote as the days passed. Governor Mactavish earnestly urged him to return to Canada. This advice Macdougall indignantly rejected; he and his friends instead began to concoct measures for forcibly entering the settlement and assuming authority. The half-breed element, growing daily more excited, now began to carry things with a high hand. Riel resolved on the capture of Fort Garry. The 2nd of November saw several bodies or groups of men tramping along the road to Fort Garry. At the fort they were met by Dr. Cowan, a chief trader in the Company's service, who was in charge.

"What do you want here with all these armed men?" he asked.

"We have come to guard the fort," answered Riel.

"Against whom?"

"Against danger," returned Riel insolently; "I have reason to believe it is threatened. I will explain no more at present."

In spite of Cowan's protest, Riel and his hundred followers marched in and billeted themselves upon the Company, declaring, however, that they intended remaining but a few days until the mysterious danger was over. The promise was worthless; Fort Garry rested for many months in the hands of the insurgents, until the arrival of Colonel Wolseley

and an Imperial force sent to quell the Red River rebellion.

Riel was now bent on proclaiming himself Dictator of the new province of Rupert's Land. One of his first acts was to seize the *Nor'-Wester* newspaper, make the editor a prisoner, and issue a proclamation to the inhabitants.

"The President and representatives," it ran, "of the French-speaking population of Rupert's Land in Council (the invaders of our rights being now expelled), already aware of your sympathy, extend the hand of friendship to you, our friendly fellow-inhabitants; and in doing so invite you to send twelve representatives in order to form one body to consider the present political state of this country, and to adopt such measures as may be deemed best for the future welfare of the same."

In the meantime suspicion began to be harboured by more than a few spectators that the Hudson's Bay Company was in some way implicated with the insurgents—that it was to its interest to prolong the tension and to make common cause against Governor Macdougall. The latter urged on its principal officer, Mr. Mactavish, who was then in a precarious state of health, the necessity of explaining the nature of the change in the government and suggesting a proclamation to the malcontents. This Mactavish at first refused to do, because, as he himself stated,

up to that moment he was without "official intimation from England or the Dominion of Canada of the fact of the transfer or of its conditions, or of the date at which they were to take practical effect upon the government of this country." But at length, and to show that he was desirous of meeting the new Governor's wishes, a proclamation was prepared and launched at the meeting convened by Riel. In his capacity of Governor of Assiniboia he charged those engaged in the unlawful acts which he recited to disperse, under pains and penalties of the law and at the risk of precipitating the "evils of anarchy and the horrors of war."

Riel's next step was to issue a bombastic proclamation, dated the 8th December, to the people of Rupert's Land and the North-West, refusing to recognise the authority of Canada ("coming to rule us with a rod of despotism") and declaring a provisional Government, with John Bruce as President and Riel as secretary. This proclamation, whose concluding words were borrowed verbatim from the Declaration of Independence, was the literary effort of an American named Stutzman, who had all along taken active interest in the proceedings over the border, possibly with the hope of furthering a movement for annexation to America.

Arrests of Louis Riel's enemies continued until over sixty persons were confined in Fort Garry. On

December 10th a new flag was hoisted over the fort —the ensign of the insurgents. It consisted of a white ground, with a representation of a fleur-de-lis and a shamrock, the latter believed to be in honour of a young Irish Catholic, O'Donoghue by name, who abandoned his priestly studies in order to join Riel. To such lengths of insolence and tyranny did the insurgents proceed that before Christmas both Macdougall and Colonel Dennis felt that it was hopeless to do anything further to support their claims, and retired from the scene of strife to St. Paul. The news that the new Governor's proclamation was a false one spread rapidly and tended greatly to strengthen Riel's hand, he having in the interval elevated himself to the Presidency.

Two thousand miles away, in Montreal, Mr. Smith surveyed the situation. He saw what Macdougall's faults of policy had been. He saw the danger, and also perceived the remedy. What was needed was a man on the spot who could treat with both factions, who from his position could look at matters both from the Company's and the Canadian standpoint, who, if he had nothing else, would at least establish the Company's *bona fides* and clear it from the imputations which were now being cast upon it. In brief, he saw his plain duty, and he did not shrink from it, although it now came to involve a grave personal risk.

It is about the middle of December that we find Sir John Macdonald writing to the luckless Governor Macdougall that his action "has stirred up the Hudson's Bay Company, and they have doubtless sent, and will continue to send, urgent messages to everybody under their influence to act energetically in putting an end to this state of anarchy."

But it may be asked, Who amongst the possible recipients of such "urgent messages" could do anything to this end? Governor Mactavish was struck down by a serious illness. Who amongst the officers of the Company throughout Rupert's Land would undertake such a task? Who, indeed, would be listened to for a moment? However, Mr. Donald A. Smith was not the one to wait for instructions from London before making up his mind as to his duty. He resolved to depart immediately for Red River, and communicated this intention to the Canadian Premier.* In view of any prejudice which

* He had previously addressed the following letter to Ottawa :—

"HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY'S OFFICE,
"MONTREAL, *24th November*, 1869.

"THE HONOURABLE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR CANADA.

"SIR,—I have to-day received from the Hudson's Bay House, London, an extract from a letter of Governor Mactavish, dated Fort Garry, 12th October, and have now the honour of transmitting it to you. In doing so I am directed by the Governor and Committee to state that the Company are anxious to afford all the assistance in their power in inducing the Red River people to allow the surveys to be proceeded with, and to use their influence in any other manner,

might exist against Mr. Smith as a Hudson's Bay officer, Sir John Macdonald felt it would be for the public advantage if he could proceed in the capacity of Commissioner from the Dominion Government. Accordingly, on December 11th, Mr. Smith received a letter from the Secretary of State appointing him, in the name of the Governor-General, Sir John Young,* Special Commissioner, "to enquire into and report upon the causes and extent" of the disaffection at Red River, to act as mediator amongst the inhabitants, and also to report on "the best mode of dealing with the Indian tribes in the country" (see Appendix B). This was, indeed, a wide-sweeping commission, and the responsibilities under it were truly immense.

Little time was lost in preparation. Requesting his brother-in-law, Richard Hardisty, an officer in the Company, to accompany him, and taking an affectionate leave of his wife, he set out on the following day for Ottawa, where he had a brief inter-

with the view of assisting the authorities at Red River to make their arrangements for the government of the country.

"And, in view of the more serious aspect which affairs at Red River have recently assumed, to beg further, on behalf of the Company, to offer the assurance that their Governor, factors, and officers generally will use their influence and best efforts to restore and maintain order throughout the territory.

"I have, etc., etc.,

"DONALD A. SMITH."

* Afterwards Lord Lisgar.

view with the authorities, and was equipped with further documents bearing upon his mission.

"Leaving Ottawa on the 13th December," he says, "I reached St. Cloud, the terminus of railway communication, on the 17th, continuing on the same day by stage, and arriving at Abercrombie on the evening of the 19th. Here we had to abandon wheeled carriages, and procuring a sleigh, after a couple of hours' rest, we resumed the journey, and on the afternoon of the 21st met Howe, Mr. Macdougall, and party about thirty miles beyond Georgetown. From him I learned how serious the aspect of affairs had latterly become at Red River;* and pushing on, we got to Pembina about 11 p.m. of the 24th."

On his arrival at Pembina on Christmas Day, 1869, he found that two eminent French-Canadians had preceded him, ostensibly acting as commissioners from the Canadian Government in the pacification of the half-breeds, the Grand Vicar de Thibault and Colonel de Salaberry. The former was supposed to possess enormous influence with the French-speaking faction, and in the absence in Rome of Bishop Taché, to be the very best man in Canada to impress them with his good counsels. His companion, Colonel de Salaberry, was a des-

* Macdougall told him it was "useless to attempt to go in. You will only be made a prisoner," he said. "I think I will get in," was Mr. Smith's quiet retort.

cendant of the hero of Chateaugay, a battle in which loyal French-Canadians repelled the American invaders of the King's territory.

The Grand Vicar had been permitted to enter by Riel, although he soon perceived that his opportunities for usefulness were limited. De Salaberry was detained until nearly a fortnight afterwards. As a matter of history they did and could do little or nothing, and remained at the Bishop's "Palace" inactive for weeks. The royal proclamation and other papers which they bore was entrusted by them to Riel, and consequently there was no likelihood of their ever being made public in the colony.

The documents bearing upon Mr. Smith's mission were highly important. He shrewdly suspected what had not occurred to de Thibault and de Salaberry, that if he brought them into the settlement Riel would seize and destroy them if it suited his purpose; wherefore he resolved upon a prudent step. Macdougall had departed, but his secretary Provencher was still at Pembina, and to him Mr. Smith communicated his fears and his intentions.

"Mr. Provencher, I wish you to keep these papers," he said, entrusting the packet to him; "yield them up on no pretence whatever to anyone but myself or my brother-in-law, Mr. Hardisty."

Provencher gave his word, and Smith and Hardisty set out for Fort Garry. It would have

been easy for the Commissioner to have sent an emissary to have reconnoitred the town and have made overtures and inquiries as to his personal safety. But he disdained such measures. To the astonishment of such of the settlers who met him, as well as the sentinels, he drove in his sleigh straight up to the gates of the fort, which were open. He requested to be shown into Governor Mactavish's house.

"Comment appelle-tu?" inquired a sentinel surlily in French, garnishing his query with an oath.

"Je me nommé Donald A. Smith et je viens de Montreal."

This was possibly not the first time that the grim Métis had heard a name which was afterwards to become a household word throughout the North-West. He and his fellow-sentinels responded that they would inform "President" Riel. The title "President" was news to the new-comer, who had not yet heard of Riel's accession of dignity. After a few moments' delay, Louis Riel appeared.

Mr. Smith saw "a short, stout man, with a large head, a shallow, puffy face, a sharp, restless, intelligent eye, a square-cut, massive forehead overhung by a mass of long and thickly clustering hair, and marked with well-cut eyebrows—altogether a remarkable-looking face, all the more so, perhaps, because it was to be seen in a land where such things are rare sights."

He said he had heard of Mr. Smith's arrival at Pembina, and was about to send off a party to effect his capture.

"I then," relates Mr. Smith, "accompanied him to a room occupied by ten or a dozen men, whom he introduced to me as members of the 'provisional Government.' . . . I was then asked to take an oath not to attempt to leave the fort that night, nor to upset their Government, legally established. This request I peremptorily refused to comply with."

As a consequence, from that day until the close of February Mr. Smith found himself a prisoner.

On the 4th of January he sat down and penned the following letter to the Prime Minister, Sir John Macdonald :—

"You are aware that upwards of sixty individuals, principally from Canada, have been imprisoned here for three weeks back; of these seven have been liberated. . . . It is said that others will be allowed to go free shortly, and this I think is not improbable; but it cannot be taken as an indication of an intention to relax in the course already determined on by the moving spirits in the 'provisional Government.' Bishop Machray called on me to-day, and he evidently has not the slightest hope that anything short of the introduction of a considerable body of troops can result in restoring order, and this appears to be the prevailing opinion

of the well-disposed portion of the community. Some of the most intelligent and trustworthy men I have seen, and they are now more than ever impressed with the necessity of unanimity and perfect accord among the English-speaking party, who, with very few exceptions, are well affected to the British Crown and a large majority to the connection with Canada.

"But in the present condition of matters there cannot and must not be any hostile collision between the different parties. Nothing is more to be deprecated than this, and any influence I can exert shall certainly be given to prevent it. I am, however, not altogether without hope that more moderate and rational counsels may prevail; and you may rest satisfied that if apparently paying little heed to the course of events, I am very far from being idle or indifferent. But while saying so, it is impossible, with the outside influences at work, to say what complications may arise, and I feel it my duty to urge upon you, and through you to Her Majesty's Imperial Government, the necessity for being prepared at the earliest possible moment to throw in a sufficient force to crush an insurrection even at the present moment formidable, and which, before many months hence, may become so strong as, looking to the position and circumstances of the country, to offer little hope of the possibility of

putting it down. Should life and property be in imminent peril and no recourse to British protection possible, I am inclined to think that with hardly a dissentient voice the law-abiding and substantial portion of the inhabitants would call on the United States Government to come to their aid, and the effect of such requisition it is needless to me to point out."

This masterly diagnosis of the existing situation and the very clear perception displayed of possible complications would, had it been published by its recipient, have spared the sender a world of subsequent calumny and the country a world of misrepresentation. But for some reason the letter was not made public by the Government of the day.

On the 15th of January, as Mr. Smith relates, he was awakened about three o'clock in the morning. Springing up in bed, he saw Riel surrounded by a guard at his bedside. The Dictator demanded of his prisoner a written order for the delivery of his Commission and official papers which had been sent for. But Mr. Smith was not to be terrified by vague threats, and emphatically refused to give any such order. The well-affected French party becoming aware of what had happened, and beginning to have doubts concerning Riel's good faith, resolved to prevent the papers from falling into his hands. Bloodshed seemed at one time imminent; but all

passed off, and ultimately, after a good deal of recrimination, it was arranged that a meeting of the inhabitants from all parts of the settlement should be called for the 19th, at which the papers bearing on the subject should be read, a guard of forty men remaining in the house to ensure the safe-keeping of the documents.*

* Major Boulton, whose life, as we shall see, was saved by Mr. Smith, says: "The whole party returned to Fort Garry together; and Hardisty was conducted to the Council Chambers. Mr. Smith came there to receive the papers, and in handing them to Mr. Smith, O'Donoghue, a member of Riel's 'provisional Government,' attempted to snatch them, but Mr. Grant drew his revolver and prevented this. The scene, as described to me, was an exciting one. For Riel and his Council were anxious to get the papers, so as to deprive Mr. Smith of any authority before the people; and it required a great deal of planning on Mr. Smith's part to get possession of them."

CHAPTER IV

UNDERMINING THE DICTATOR

"*THE part I had to act was that of a mediator. Not only would one rash or unguarded word have increased the difficulty, but even the pointing of a finger might, on more than one occasion, have been sufficient to put the whole country into a flame.*"

Probably never before in history has a regularly ordained meeting been held in British territory under such conditions. Indeed, it would be difficult to find a parallel unless we turn to the assembly of Polish patriots in the public square of Warsaw, in 1830, the out-of-doors deliberations of the Moscow Patriotic Committee, in the memorable winter of 1812, the memorable gathering in Podolia in 1786, even the most famous of the open-air congregations of the Jesuits of New France as related in the pages of Parkman. All are impressive, but none surpasses the scene before us. It furnishes a striking object-lesson in Anglo-Celtic manners, of Saxon traditions of free speech, of simple physical endurance.

In the open air, with the thermometer twenty degrees below zero, in the teeth of a biting blast,

this meeting is conducted with a respect for decorum and ancient parliamentary methods worthy of Westminster itself. Icicles hang on men's beards; the faces of many of the aged in that vast sea of faces are pinched and blue with cold.

Out of the precincts of the fort four or five men emerge and step out upon the small platform, flanked by two tumbrils.

The first is seen to be Louis Riel, President of the "provisional Government." His eyes burn with a strange brightness, his dark skin is overshot with pallor, his lips are sternly compressed. At sight of him a cheer goes up from the French and half-breeds, men of his own race—a cheer half-Indian, half-Highland, not at all a French acclamation. Some of the Scotch and English settlers feebly join in the cheer, perhaps through policy. They do not know yet what to make of Riel. Some openly admire him; many are afraid. At his side is O'Donoghue, the recreant priest, next is Colonel de Salaberry, who bears a name revered by millions of his fellow-countrymen. By his side walks a man whose face is unfamiliar to nearly the whole of those present. He is destined soon to be known by all. It is the man whom they have come to meet; it is on his account this meeting has been summoned.

Riel advances towards the edge of the platform and raises his voice to address the multitude. Those

who expect an impassioned speech, perhaps a declaration that the Commissioner from Canada has been placed under arrest, are disappointed. He merely moves that one of the old settlers, a Mr. Bunn, be called into the chair. The motion is seconded by a certain Pierre Laveiller, and Mr. Bunn strides forward to his seat. Although an undercurrent of excitement is flowing, it is evident that every effort will be made to prevent its coming to the surface. The chairman instantly opens the proceedings. There is no prayer; Protestants and Roman Catholics are watching each other narrowly out of their eyes.

Never before in the whole of this vast domain—a domain as large as Europe—had white men foregathered in such numbers. Riel adroitly managed to have himself appointed French interpreter, and one Judge Black became secretary to the meeting. Without further delay, the chairman begged to introduce the Canadian Commissioner to the people of Red River, who would himself explain his mission amongst them.

At the mention of Mr. Donald A. Smith a loud cheer was raised, but almostly instantly suppressed on a signal from Riel. Mr. Smith arose and came forward, holding a packet of papers in his right hand. He began by reading Secretary of State Howe's official letter to him, which, he said, "had

been handed to him in Canada." When he had finished there was some more applause, but the French party remained ominously silent. Riel having translated the letter into French, Mr. Smith now thought it prudent, by striking a personal note, to place himself more *en rapport* with the gathering. He therefore spoke as follows :—

"As reference has been repeatedly made in these papers to Mr. Macdougall, I may say that neither with that gentleman nor any of his party have I any, even the slightest acquaintance, having never seen him or any of his people, save for a few minutes on the road from Pembina to Georgetown. (Cheers.) And at this present moment I have not written a single word either to him or any of his party. My commission is simply and solely from the Government of Canada. Although," he continued, "I am personally unknown to you, I am as much interested in the welfare of this country as others I could name. On both sides I have a number of relations in this land (cheers), not merely 'Scotch cousins,' but blood relations. Besides that, my wife and her children are natives of Rupert's Land. (Cheers.) Hence, though I myself am a Scotchman, you will not be surprised that I should feel a deep interest in this great country and its inhabitants. (Cheers.)"

It became increasingly difficult to speak and be heard; but Mr. Smith, by raising his voice to the utmost, resolved on stating his case.

JOHN STUART

"I am here to-day in the interests of Canada, but only so far as they are in accordance with the interests of this country. ("Hear, hear," and cheers.) Under no other circumstances would I have consented to act. (Cheers.) As to the Hudson's Bay Company, my connection with that body is, I suppose, generally known; but I will say that if it could do any possible good to the country, I would, at this moment, resign my position in that Company. I sincerely hope that my humble efforts may, in some measure, contribute to bring about, peaceably, union and entire accord among all classes of the people of this land. (Cheers.)"

Mr. Smith read the following letter sent by the Governor-General of Canada to himself personally:—

"'*December 12th,* OTTAWA, 1869.

"'MY DEAR MR. SMITH,—I learn with satisfaction that you have placed your services at the disposal of the Canadian Government, and that you are proceeding to Red River to give the parties that are at variance the benefit of your experience——'"

[Riel here interrupted the reading to ask, with forced parliamentary politeness, "Is that letter public or private?" Mr. Smith replied, "It is a letter to me as Commissioner."

A mild uproar ensued, chiefly because the French did not understand the nature of their leader's interruption. But it was suddenly checked by a sense of decorum. It was plain they were prepared to carry out his wishes, whatever they might be.

Blood might be shed at a signal. Both parties glared at each other, but that was all. "The document is public," ruled the chairman, "and ought to be read." Mr. Smith resumed his reading of the letter.]

——"'give the parties that are at variance the benefit of your experience, influence, and mediation. In my capacity as Her Majesty's representative in the British North American possessions I have addressed letters to Governor Mactavish, the Protestant Bishop of Rupert's Land, and the Vicar-General, who acts in lieu of the Roman Catholic Bishop during his presence in Rome. I have sent them copies of the message received by telegraph from Her Majesty's Secretary of State, which forms the staple of the proclamation addressed to her subjects in the North-West Territory. You will observe that it calls upon any who have complaints to make or wishes to express to address themselves to me as Her Majesty's representative. And you may state with the utmost confidence that the Imperial Government has no intention of acting otherwise, or permitting others to act otherwise than in perfect good faith towards the inhabitants of the Red River district of the North-West.

"'The people may rely upon it that respect and protection will be extended towards the different religious persuasions' (loud cheers), 'that titles of every description of property will be perfectly guarded' (renewed cheers), 'and that all the franchises which have existed, of which the people may prove themselves qualified to exercise, shall be duly continued or liberally conferred.

"'In declaring the desire and determination of Her Majesty's Cabinet you may safely use the terms of the ancient formula, that right shall be done in all cases.

"'Wishing you a prosperous journey and all success in your mission of peace and goodwill, I remain,

"'Faithfully yours,

"'JOHN YOUNG.'"

As the reading finished Riel instantly sprang glowering to his feet.

"John Young?" he iterated. "Who is he? That letter is not signed 'Governor.'"

"But," urged Mr. Smith, "it is written and signed 'In my capacity as Her Majesty's representative.'"

Riel was fain to be content with this, and at once translated the letter into French, which he did volubly and in a loud though somewhat harsh voice.

Turning to Vicar-General Thibault, who had taken his seat on the platform, Mr. Smith requested that he produce certain letters from the Government of Canada to Governor Mactavish and the Bishop of Rupert's Land, which had been confided to his care before leaving Canada. "I have been authorised by Governor Mactavish to make this request. The document I particularly ask for is an official one, addressed by the Governor-General of Canada to Mr. Mactavish. In explanation I would say that the

Vicar-General and Colonel de Salaberry preceded me from Canada by a few days. It was intended that we should have had communications by the way; and that being the intention, for convenience' sake the letters were given to the Vicar-General. The letter to Mr. Mactavish is explanatory of the views of the Canadian Government, and shows what the Queen wished to say to her faithful subjects here."

Now this was precisely what the Dictator Riel wished to prevent. He seized the letters from the Vicar-General, but had not dared to destroy them, although counselled to do so by O'Donoghue. In fact, Riel all through this business proved himself a strange mixture of strength and weakness. He was at once the victim of ambition and cowardice. When he was on the eve of taking a bold, unprincipled step, he listened afar off to the voice of prudence, and desisted in the nick of time. O'Donoghue once said to him, "Riel, you could become President of the Republic of Canada if you kept your back stiff all the time."

The Dictator now interposed. He turned upon Mr. Smith almost fiercely. "I do not want the documents to be read."

A body of the English resented this. "We will have it," cried several, amidst calls for silence from the chairman.

Riel seemed to stand firm—his followers exchanged

significant glances. There was a mysterious fumbling in pockets, and a man named Tait muttered to his neighbour that the French were all armed. "So are we," was the reply. "Only parliamentary coolness can save us from bloodshed. If it comes to a fight, my first shot will be for Riel." Meteorologically speaking it *was* cool enough; the air grew more biting every moment; only the growing excitement kept it from being keenly felt.

Judge Black protested against the documents being withheld from the meeting.

"Who has them now?" cried a voice in Scotch accents amidst the babel; to which Laveiller replied, "Mr. O'Donoghue has them."

This statement was corroborated by the chairman: "The Vicar-General states that Mr. O'Donoghue seized them, and has got them."

"I ask the Vicar-General," called out Riel, "if either of the letters alluded to belongs to Mr. Smith?"

"No," said Mr. Thibault, amidst French cheering. The Commissioner paused a moment, and then repeated his statement that Governor Mactavish had authorised him to ask for his letter.

"I, too," said Bishop Machray, "will ask my letter from Mr. O'Donoghue, and I think he will give it."

When Judge Black again urged the production of

the letters, Riel turned upon him angrily. He said the secretary was out of his rôle in presuming to address the meeting.

The question was finally put to the assembly that the confiscated documents be produced. It was carried by a large majority, Riel craftily abandoning his position when he saw the trend of opinion.

"Gentlemen," said Riel, who now vainly hoped for an opportunity to destroy the papers, "I move this meeting adjourn, and that we hunt up the letters to-morrow."

There is little doubt that had this been done the missing papers would never have been found. But Riel's rival, Laveiller, who was on the side of the Queen's Government, was not to be put off in this fashion. He insisted on going in search at once, in O'Donoghue's company. As he passed into the fort the priest-rebel hissed at him, "Scélérat!" (Rascal!) Laveiller only shrugged his shoulders and smiled. They went straight to Schimdt's safe, and in a few moments Laveiller's eye lighted on the stolen papers. They returned with them, and handed them to the secretary. Riel was now in an impatient frame of mind. He began to fear the effect which this Commissioner's methods might have on the people. He saw he had to deal with a man who was bent on undermining his influence

as Dictator. But as yet he did not dream that a copy of the Queen's proclamation Riel had artfully destroyed was in Mr. Smith's possession.

"The paper I want," said the Commissioner, "is a proclamation from the Governor-General, copies of which came into the settlement, but where they are I do not know."

At first the Commissioner delayed reading, so as to give Riel an opportunity to produce the missing proclamation. But this happened to be the one document Riel had actually burnt. He started at Mr. Smith's next words.

"One of the documents I am about to read is a communication from the Queen our Sovereign. It is the telegraph message referred to in one of the papers addressed to me, and which was put into my hands in Canada very shortly after being received from England. It is a message from Earl Granville to Sir John Young, dated November 26th."

Amidst a profound silence Mr. Smith then read out the following :—

"'Make what use you think best of what follows. The Queen has heard with surprise and regret that certain misguided persons have banded together to oppose by force the entry of the future Lieutenant-Governor into our territory in Red River. Her Majesty does not mistrust the loyalty of persons in that settlement, and can only ascribe to misunder-

standing or misrepresentation their opposition to a change planned for their advantage.'"

The expression on Riel's face as Mr. Smith proceeded was a study. Was he already counting the cost?

"'She relies on your Government to use every effort to explain whatever misunderstandings may have arisen—to ascertain their wants and conciliate the goodwill of the people of the Red River settlement. But in the meantime she authorises you to signify to them the sorrow and displeasure with which she views the unreasonable and lawless proceedings that have taken place; and her expectation that if any parties have desires to express or complaints to make, respecting their condition and prospects, they will address themselves to the Governor-General of Canada.

"'The Queen expects from her representative that, as he will be always ready to receive well-founded grievances, so will he exercise power and authority she entrusted to him in the support of order and the suppression of unlawful disturbances.'"

Tumultuous cheering greeted the close of this epistle. Mr. Smith felt that enough had been done for one day. This was shared by the majority, and the meeting was adjourned until the morrow, after a sitting of five hours. No sooner had this been done than one (Burke) sprang up and in the Queen's

name demanded of Riel the release of the prisoners. But the Dictator was now bent on playing a bold game; he was in no mood for concessions or conciliation. "Not now," he answered coldly. Whereupon numerous voices cried, "Yes, yes." At a signal, as if to show that he was still master of the situation, Riel's men flew to arms. There was a momentary indecision. The challenge was not accepted, and the assemblage dispersed.

Mr. Smith's feelings as he retired to rest that night alternated between fear and hope.

He dreaded the further results of Riel's ambition and influence among the Métis. He hoped that his own efforts might nullify this influence and effect a reconciliation between the contending parties. But from his first interview with Louis Riel he was not sanguine that bloodshed could be entirely averted. He was right. But it was only to his own efforts, as we shall see, that bloodshed was confined to the smallest proportions.

On the following day he observed a larger number of Indians mingled in the crowd than before, even necessitating the services of an Indian interpreter. Several volunteered to become French interpreters, but this was an office Riel had specially reserved for himself. Mr. Smith again came forward to finish reading the documents. He began with one from

the Governor-General to Governor Mactavish, and read a further one to Macdougall.

At the close of a half-hour's adjournment, during which Riel was observed in close confabulation with his associates, the Dictator moved that twenty representatives should be elected by the English population of Red River to meet twenty other representatives of the French on the following Tuesday at the court-house. The business of this meeting would be to consider the subject of Mr. Smith's commission and to decide what would be the best for the welfare of the country.

The proposition seemed a fair one to most of those present, although one citizen was heard to exclaim that the resolution "seemed to cast a doubt on Mr. Smith's commission." "Not at all," declared Riel; "we accept his commission as genuine."

Committees were then appointed to meet and apportion the English and French representation for the different parishes in the colony and to determine the mode of election.

It seemed as if the head of the "provisional Government" was reconsidering his steps, and both classes of the community felt considerably relieved; caps were thrown in the air, and French and English shook hands over what they considered the happy prospects of the colony.

All but a few of the shrewdest men looked upon

the difficulties as all but settled. Louis Riel was posing as a patriot. He had promised to disband most of the armed men he commanded at Fort Garry. He certainly had no intention of keeping this promise, but a rumour which spread a day or two later, probably instigated by himself, saved him from the reproach of breaking his pledge. He had numerous prisoners still in confinement, and it was now rumoured that a body of English and Scotch were advancing to effect their release. This false report furnished Riel with an excuse for increasing rather than diminishing his garrison. Moreover, he bestirred himself so effectually amongst the French half-breeds as to elect his own nominees as representatives to the Convention, thus regaining the prestige he had lost and at the same time defeating Laveiller's party. His success encouraged him to commit another act of trespass on the Hudson's Bay Company by taking possession of the mess-room and adjoining apartments, which were then occupied by Dr. Cowan. The Chief Factor was obliged to seek other quarters. His departure was greeted by the jeers of the insurgents. Riel now freely appropriated any property whatsoever he chose in the fort.

On the following day, 23rd of January, the chief prisoner, Dr. Schultz, succeeded in making his escape by opening his window and lowering him-

self by means of strips of buffalo hide cut from the robes which furnished his bed. He then managed to climb the wall, and obtaining the use of a horse and sleigh from a friend, fled in the direction of the Stone Fort. As soon as his escape was discovered on the following morning a party of Frenchmen were sent off in hot pursuit, but their quest proved fruitless. Had Dr. Schultz fallen into Riel's hands, his life would have probably been sacrificed to the vengeance of the Dictator. But he escaped, to become, at a later day, Sir John Schultz, Governor of Manitoba.

In the meantime Mr. Smith remained quiet, waiting for the meeting of the Convention. A movement had been set on foot amongst the English population of Winnipeg to establish a provisional Government in opposition to that of Riel. "We learn," said they in the course of a resolution presented at a meeting held for the purpose, "that Mr. Smith is empowered on the part of Canada to make to this people certain concessions. We fully believe that in these being made lies all our hope for a speedy relief from the existent state of confusion. Looking to a probability of the Council deciding that Mr. Smith's promises may not be such as will warrant the possession immediately of this country by the Canadian Government, that the restoration by the public of Governor Mactavish to the Executive to be aided by a council elected by a popular vote."

But this project was defeated by a large body of Americans, who had got access to the meeting, and who endeavoured to foist the principle of annexation upon the delegates for Winnipeg.

On the 25th the new Convention met. The first ominous tidings which were passed from mouth to mouth amongst the English delegates announced that one of their number, Mr. Thomas Spence, co-delegate from the parish of St. Peter, had been mysteriously placed under arrest by Riel. This naturally caused grave misgivings. The meeting broke up without anything being transacted, to meet again on the following day. All that was done then was to send for Mr. Smith's papers, and after some discussion, to place them in the hands of the Secretary, Louis Schmidt, for the purpose of translating them into French. That evening an incident occurred which evinces the sharpness of the watch which was set over the officials of the country at Fort Garry by Riel. Mr. Smith knew that every step he took was shadowed by spies; that virtually from the moment he set foot in the colony he was a prisoner of Riel's, and that he could be made so actually at any moment.

Governor Mactavish, having occasion to send some letters to Stone Fort on the evening in question, entrusted them to a messenger, who, by taking great precautions, succeeded in leaving Fort Garry without

being observed. He had not gone far, however, when a man seemed to spring up out of the snow. He presented a musket, ordered the messenger to halt, then silently conducted him back through the gates into Riel's presence. Riel demanded his papers, received them, and smiling scornfully, returned them unopened to the Company's Governor.

At noon on the 27th the Convention again sat, when all Mr. Smith's papers were read and discussed. The proclamation was again called for, but, of course, could not be found. But, as we have seen, Riel's treachery had been foiled by Mr. Smith in reading out the telegram from Lord Granville upon which the proclamation was based.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Smith at this meeting, "Canada is prepared to respect the people of this country and grant them everything that is just."

It was then proposed that the original list of rights should be handed to Mr. Smith, in order that his views might be ascertained of the likelihood of their being assented to by Canada. This list of rights was duly drawn up to the extent of twenty articles by a special committee and carried by the Convention. As soon as the last article had been disposed of Riel proposed that, as they had fully discussed the terms upon which they would become a territory of the Dominion of Canada, it was now advisable to consider the advantages of entering the

confederation as a province. At this time Riel was inclined to abate something of his ambition: he would not continue president of a republic, but at least he wished to be premier of a province. It was pointed out to him that almost as much, if not more, solid advantage was to be gained from an alliance on an equal footing with the great provinces which made up the Canadian Dominion as to be the dictator of a separate colony or state. But he was determined to emphasise the point that the territory had always belonged to the citizens and not to the Company. He therefore introduced a further clause, namely:—

"That all bargains with the Hudson's Bay Company for the transfer of this territory be considered null and void: and that any arrangements with reference to the transfer of this country shall be carried on only with the people of this country."

But this was too much for the delegates, who negatived it by twenty-two to seventeen. "The language," says Mr. Smith, "used by Mr. Riel on this occasion was violent in the extreme." He jumped up and began pacing up and down the council-room in a state of great anger and excitement.

"The devil take it—we *must* win. The voting here may go as it likes, but the measure must be carried all the same. But it is a pity it has been

defeated—and by those traitors!" Whereat Riel pointed to certain of his French-speaking opponents.

One of these jumped up and indignantly exclaimed, "I was not sent here, Mr. Riel, to vote at your dictation, but according to my conscience. While there are some things for which we must blame the Company, there is a good deal for which we must thank them. I do not exculpate the Company altogether, but I say that in time of need we have often been indebted to them for assistance and kindness."

"Remember," retorted Riel, "that there is a provisional Government, and though this measure has been lost by the voice of the Convention, I have friends enough who are determined to add it to the list on their own responsibility. As for you," continued the "little Napoleon," turning dramatically to the three men he had named, "your careers are finished in this country for ever."

The meeting broke up in confusion. Riel, burning with hatred of the Company and its representative, directed his footsteps to the bedchamber of Mactavish, where he lay already a dying man.

The poor Governor thought his last hour had come, as Riel opened the floodgates of his violent abuse. Mr. Smith longed to go to his friend's assistance, but he was not even permitted to comfort Mrs. Mactavish, whose distress was pitiful to witness. Any attempt to thwart Riel by force at that moment

would almost certainly have had a fatal termination. Riel's orders to the guards were peremptory.

"Shoot that Scotchman Smith if he makes an attempt at escape or disobeys my injunctions."

Any breach of the harsh discipline he had imposed was met with rigour. One of the English prisoners, William Hallett, for some trivial offence or an expression unflattering to Riel, was cruelly put in irons. The late Chief Factor, Dr. Cowan, was seized and incarcerated in the same room with Hallet. A rumour spread through the settlement that both were to be shot by order of the Dictator. Riel's plan was, of course, to overawe the English delegates and force them into compliance with his wishes.

On the receipt of the news of the outrage committed by Riel against Governor Mactavish, a messenger hurried to the latter's brother-in-law, Mr. Bannatyne, and informed him of the scandalous occurrence. That gentleman at once took steps to find out how far the safety of the prisoners at Fort Garry was imperilled. On his way he met Riel, who ordered him peremptorily not to go near the fort if he valued his life. This added to Bannatyne's alarm; he resolved to find some way of gaining access to Mr. Mactavish's residence. That night (6th February) he so far accomplished his design that he had just climbed over the wall of the fort, and

was on the point of dropping down on the inside, when he was perceived by one of the guards. The next moment a heavy stick of wood flew past his head. Bannatyne, finding himself discovered, was forced to abandon his design that night. The following day—a Sunday—while Riel and many of his followers were at church at St. Boniface on the other side of the river, Bannatyne succeeded, in company with a friend, in passing the guards and gaining an entrance to the Governor's house. There he found Mrs. Mactavish in a dreadful state at the condition of her husband. While he was talking to the Governor's wife several of the French at the fort, having perceived Bannatyne enter the gate, ran across the ice and the river to apprise Riel. The Dictator was in the act of prayer; he rose hastily, fearing some treachery. On reaching the fort he found the two English citizens gone: he sent a guard after them and they were brought back. Bannatyne was arrested and placed in confinement. But an attempt to arrest a certain Nolin failed, through the action of that person's relatives, who set upon the guards and maltreated them so that they were glad to return to the fort. Other turbulent episodes took place calculated to inflame the community.

Riel's life at this period was, he believed, in constant jeopardy. One evening Riel went out and

called upon a brother of Nolin's for the purpose, it is said, of explaining matters and, if possible, effecting reconciliation. While he was sitting in the house eating supper a man with a gun passed the window, upon which Riel suddenly paled, threw down his knife and fork, and declared he was about to be shot. Nolin answered that he would not be shot in his house, and instantly went out to see who the man was. He turned out to be an Indian, seeking the way to a comrade's lodge, and perfectly innocent of an attempt on Riel's life. Nevertheless, it illustrates the man's state of mind and the reason he always surrounded himself with a numerous bodyguard. Almost immediately after the above incident this bodyguard—forty in number—arrived to accompany Riel back to his quarters.

In the course of the Convention it was deemed advisable to take the opinion of Governor Mactavish on a certain point.

Two delegates, Messrs. Sutherland and Fraser, therefore visited him at his residence within the walls of the fort.

"In order to clear away my own doubts," said Mr. Sutherland to the Convention, "I asked Governor Mactavish's opinion as to the advisability of forming a provisional Government. He replied, "Form a Government, for God's sake, and restore peace and order in the settlement."

They said that another question put was, "Will you delegate your power as Governor to another?" Mactavish answered, "I will not delegate my power to anyone."

Riel, ever anxious to pick a quarrel where the Company was concerned, here sprang up with a great show of fury. "I would like to ask whether Mr. Mactavish declared himself the Governor."

Mr. Fraser: "He did not."

Riel (hastily): "It were well he did not. As out of this Convention I would have formed a council of war, and—we would have seen the consequences!"

The English delegates having at last consented to the formation of a provisional Government as the only remedy for the evils which rent the colony in twain, nominations were made of the various officers, leaving that of president to the last. The friends of Riel proved faithful to their chief, and at midnight, on the 9th February, he was duly elected to be head of the new Government.

In another portion of this volume will be found related, in Mr. Smith's own words, the story of the Portage la Prairie rising, led by Major Boulton, the surrender of this English body to Riel, and his sentence of death upon the leader and the perfectly inoffensive young man, Thomas Scott. Mr. Smith interceded for both of the unlawfully condemned

men, and finally Riel consented to spare Boulton's life if the Commissioner lent him some assistance in his plans.

"I will spare Boulton if you will go round and get the English to elect their representatives, and send them again to meet me in Council."

To this Mr. Smith consented, as being in the interests of peace.

When Mr. Smith consented, the so-called "Chief Justice" James Ross offered to accompany him; but on considering the matter Ross decided that it would be much better for the object of the mission that he should not do so, and he therefore wrote Mr. Smith the following letter:—

"MONDAY MORNING, *20th February*, 1870.

"DEAR SIR,—On further consideration, I am satisfied that the mission projected for to-day will be much more successful if you alone undertake it. My course at the Convention, which the people below highly disapproved of as being too friendly to the French, would not only render valueless anything I might urge, but perhaps even help to intensify the feeling against union. So satisfied am I of this, that in the public interest I must refrain from taking part in the mission.

"I am, sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"(Signed) JAMES ROSS."

Major Boulton, in his narrative, states as follows:—

"During all this time Mr. Donald Smith had been diligently prosecuting the practical object of his mission, to bring the people into direct communication with the Dominion Government through the delegates that had been appointed, and was anxious to get them off. He no doubt felt it of importance that there should be an evidence of arms being laid down to ensure a proper reception for them, though he himself never seems to have consented to an amnesty in any way." He says elsewhere, "There were so many inflammable elements, and such a strong feeling against Riel's tyranny, that there was constant danger of another uprising, and only great tact and prudence prevented this further calamity."

But nothing could save poor Scott, who was as clearly murdered by Riel and his followers as if they had stabbed him with their own hands.

Mr. Smith supported Bishop Machray and the Rev. Mr. Young in their request for the body of Scott, for whom a coffin and grave had been provided, but Riel refused. The additional damning evidence of the hundred men might stand against the perpetrators of the bloody deed. It is said that Scott's body had been duly buried, but "had been exhumed, sewed up in canvas, weighted with cannon balls, and sunk beneath the ice at the junction of the Seine with the Red River" close at hand.

Finding it useless to attempt further with Louis Riel, whose hands were stained with the murder of Scott, Mr. Smith departed from Fort Garry for Ottawa. There was only one power now whom the insurgent leaders could be expected to recognise or to fear, and that power was the British Army.

The country had quieted down: the leaders were without a following.

"The mission on which I went at that time was a most delicate and difficult one. It was one of no ordinary difficulty, and I felt the great responsibility at the time; I felt the part I had to act was that of mediator, and I believe that was the desire of the Government at Ottawa. It was not to raise up strife and bad feeling, but to assure the people that they would be received into the Dominion on equitable, liberal terms, and to endeavour to keep the settlement quiet and peaceable until such time as the Canadian Government would be in a position to send a force into the country. This it was which I endeavoured to carry out. Not only would one rash and unguarded word have increased the difficulty, but even the pointing of a finger might on more than one occasion have been sufficient to put the whole country into a flame."

It is easy to imagine what would have happened in such a country had the people once come into armed collision with each other.

"No one," he afterwards told the House of Commons, "can deplore more than I do that a single life should have been lost, but I have since returned thanks most fervently that it was not a thousandfold worse under the circumstances. I believe that had a different course been pursued, instead of our having to deplore the loss of three lives we would have seen the destruction of hundreds, perhaps of a quarter or a half of the population."

Immediately on his arrival at the capital of Canada, Mr. Smith was closeted with the Government of the day. He wrote out a full narrative of his experiences, whose graphic vigour cannot be too highly praised.

Owing to the state of uncertainty and excitement at this time, a formal recognition of his services was delayed. Petty jealousies and animosities, which one can now easily understand, increased the delay; and, very little to the credit of the Government, it was not until February 22, 1872, nearly two years after his services were rendered, that Mr. Smith received any official recognition of what he had done. He was then thanked in a lengthy letter by the Governor-General in Council. The events which led to Mr. Smith's appointment in December, 1869, as a Special Commissioner to the North-West were "now matters of history." "But," ran the document, "the Governor-General feels that the

important services which in that capacity you rendered to the country have not yet received that official recognition to which they are justly entitled." The Viceroy went on to express his "appreciation of the patriotism with which on that occasion you placed your services at the disposal of the Government, and at an inclement season of the year cheerfully undertook a long and fatiguing journey to Fort Garry to aid, by your presence and influence, in the repression of the unlooked-for disturbance which had unhappily broken out in the North-West.

"Subsequent events have, in His Excellency's opinion, fully justified the wisdom of his selection of a Commissioner, for if the serious dangers which then threatened the settlement were happily averted, and law and order peacefully re-established at Fort Garry, His Excellency feels that the result was in no small degree due to the ability, discretion, and firmness with which you executed your commission, and to the judicious use of the influence which your character and standing enabled you to exercise over all classes of the community at Red River."

Lord Strathcona has recalled good-humouredly the eagerness with which the Government desired to thank him. "So anxious was the Ministry that I should obtain their letter thanking me for what I had done while acting as Commissioner in 1869-70,

that having sent one copy to Fort Garry, I was informed by telegraph—for I was then on the point of leaving for England—that another duplicate had been sent to my address by the same steamer by which I took passage."

His services had indeed borne fruit. He had undermined the power of Riel. The army would come, but not a single blow would be struck by the people in defence of the pretensions of the "Dictator."

CHAPTER V

AFTER THE FLIGHT OF RIEL

HAVING penned his report to the Government of Canada on his extraordinary experiences at Red River, Mr. Smith had no intention of seeking rest and leisure in the haunts of civilisation. The West again called him, and in this instance the call was hardly less important in its way, although it did not encompass the possibility of bloodshed.

No one who in 1870 travelled in the remote fastnesses of mountain, forest, or prairie, and paused at any one of the numerous Hudson's Bay Company posts scattered throughout this vast region, but would have been made aware of the profound dissatisfaction which existed as a result of the great transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada.

It was called "the Great Betrayal." As a result of the coalition of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Company, there had been an agreement with the officers of both companies whereby their interests were amalgamated with those of the London shareholders. This arrangement became known as the Deed Poll of 1834, and it was still

in force when the news of the transfer of the territory to Canada in 1869 was heralded throughout the North-West.

It was the time-honoured custom for the principal officers of the Company scattered throughout Rupert's Land to hold an annual meeting at Norway House to discuss trade matters and regulate the affairs for the ensuing season. They called themselves the "Wintering Partners" in contradistinction to those somewhat prosaic persons in London who supplied —or whose ancestors had supplied—the capital for the fur trade. Among these men were many of the first explorers of remote parts of the North-West, men whose pluck and endurance had led them to penetrate into unknown parts of the far north in the interests of that company of which they held themselves to form each a unit. Was it strange that they should feel themselves entitled to share with the stay-at-home capitalists any sum which should be received as compensation for the relinquishment of the great fur company's sovereignty?

Consequently, when it was known that the Company in London had concluded its bargain with the Colonial Office to cede its sovereignty to Canada upon the payment of £300,000 the factors and traders secretly resolved that their claims should not be ignored.

In July the council of officers was to meet at Nor-

way House for the last time under the old régime. Mr. Smith, as chief executive officer of the Company, decided to be present and preside over the gathering. Few of the officers knew his intention, when one morning a few days before the meeting his canoe arrived opposite this famous Hudson's Bay Company post.

Of the body of tanned and rugged veterans who faced Mr. Smith on this memorable occasion, all were men of brains and courage. Some of them were scholars of no mean type. One officer might have made a reputation as an artist, and another as a musician; another has been characterised as "one of the most intrepid among the many brave men who had sought for the lost Franklin in the darkness of the long polar night." These men had voluntarily chosen the career they had followed in the wilderness: loyalty to the Company, however, did not prevent on their part a grim resolve not to be defrauded of their just rights.

The future Governor-in-Chief of the Hudson's Bay Company in London—the official successor of Prince Rupert—came in the course of a long life to preside over many and strangely diverse assemblages; but there were few which in its *milieu*, its *personnel*, and its objects could be compared to this one in the wilds of the Great Lone Land.

Outside the fort, Red Indians, in picturesque

garb, smoked and listened to the noise of the white man's deliberations as the sound came through the open windows. The Indian squaws and children crooned and gambolled in the midsummer sun, while an array of white clerks and half-breed voyagers, who had accompanied their superiors to the famous meeting place at the head of Lake Winnipeg, stood about and talked in low tones of the issue of the "pow-wow."

The discussion partook of a somewhat stormy character. But Mr. Smith did not lose for a moment his hold of the meeting. They could listen with patience to the modern views of one who had spent thirty-two years in the Company's service. Mr. Smith admitted that it was a critical time in their affairs, but that the situation demanded coolness and deliberation. His language inspired confidence, and it was decided to represent the claims of the wintering partners to the Company in England. The upshot was that the presiding officer was unanimously appointed representative of the officers, and accepted the task of presenting their claims. Here is an extract from a leading newspaper at the time, which shows the opinion entertained by the public of the meeting :—

"But the traders of the Nor'-West proposed a game which, if carried out, would more than make up to them the share of the £300,000 which they say

the English shareholders intend robbing them of. At a meeting of the Council of Rupert's Land—the body which controls the Company's affairs of the territory—a motion was submitted by one of the chief factors, proposing that they should secrete for their special use and benefit furs to the value of £40,000, to be divided amongst the factors and those interested just as soon as it should be clearly shown that the English shareholders intended gobbling up the whole of the Canadian purchase money. A lengthy and animated discussion took place on this exceedingly dishonest proposition, after which, the motion being put, it was lost simply by the casting vote of the chairman."

One of those present said to the writer many years afterwards: "From the moment that Donald A. Smith promised us to go to England to obtain our share of the transfer money, I felt that our interests were safe. Someone remarked to me, 'Do you really think that Sir Stafford Northcote and the committee in London will listen to your representative?' I said, 'You may depend upon it, a man like Donald A. Smith will make himself listened to anywhere.' 'But how much money do you think he will get out of that £300,000?' I replied that he would obtain a fair share. 'What do you call a fair share—£10,000, fifty thousand dollars?' 'No, sir,' said I, 'mark my words, he will not return to Canada

without at least £100,000.' My prediction, as you know, came true; only the estimate happened to be under the mark."

But of this mission to England more anon.

Before the meeting broke up the subject of supplying liquor to the Indians was dealt with, and it was decided that so far as the Company was concerned an end would be put to the traffic. It was arranged that representations on the subject should be made to the Canadian Government, and when some months later Mr. Smith was appointed by Sir John Macdonald, with two other gentlemen, to act as the first Council of the North-West Territories prior to the formation of the Council of 1873, one of the strongest recommendations made by these gentlemen to the authorities at Ottawa related to the prevention of the sale or supply of intoxicants to the Indians inhabiting this vast region.

Meanwhile, in this summer of 1870 Colonel Garnet Wolseley and the men of the Red River Brigade were pressing on to Fort Garry. The story of the difficulties and hardships endured by the Red River Brigade is a familiar one to readers of modern military history. The bad roads, the dense forests, the little-known waterways, the leaky boats, the irksome portages, all contributed to retard the expedition and to damp the spirits of the men.

Arriving at Fort Alexander from Norway House,

Mr. Smith determined to await there Colonel Wolseley and the Red River Expedition, and accompany them to Fort Garry.

As yet there were no tidings of the on-coming brigade. A month before, however, an intrepid British officer, who had reached Fort Garry *viâ* American territory, conversed with Riel, and departed thence to join his superior officer at Rainy Lake, hundreds of miles east of where Mr. Smith now awaited Colonel Wolseley's arrival, had passed a day at Fort Alexander.

This Hudson's Bay post stood about a mile from the entrance to Winnipeg River, and was ninety miles from Fort Garry. On the morning of the 20th of August Indian couriers announced to Mr. Smith the near approach of the little Imperial force.

It was nearing nightfall when the entire body of the troops, headed by Colonel Wolseley and his staff, reached Fort Alexander. "Some accidents," wrote one of the party, "had occurred, and many had been the close shaves of rock and rapid, but no life had been lost. From the 600 miles of wilderness there emerged 400 soldiers, whose muscles and sinews, taxed and tested by continuous toil, had been developed to a pitch of excellence seldom equalled, and whose appearance and physique, browned, tanned, and powerful, told of the glorious climate of these northern solitudes."

The rays of the sinking sun were suffusing the landscape when the large canoe touched the wooden pier opposite the fort. When the commander of the expedition stepped ashore he saw his men assembled for the first time together since they had left Lake Superior far behind. "It was a meeting not devoid of such associations as make such things memorable, and the cheer which went up from the soldiers who lined the steep bank to bid him welcome had in it a note of that sympathy which binds men together by the inward consciousness of difficulties shared in common and dangers successfully overcome together."

Mr. Smith shook hands with Colonel Garnet Wolseley and his fellow-officers, and bade them welcome to Fort Alexander. The gallant colonel, who had been some years Deputy-Quartermaster-General in Canada, he had previously met. Among the others, of whom he then made the acquaintance for the first time, were two young officers who afterwards rose to distinction. One was Captain Buller, a tall, sturdily built Devonian, with a bluff, good-natured manner; the other, Lieutenant Butler, similar in build, a fearless Irishman, of witty speech and obvious ability.

As General Sir Redvers Buller, V.C., and General Sir William Butler, K.C.B., these two officers afterwards became famous throughout the Empire.

After a dinner at which Mr. Smith was the host, the party retired for the night at the fort, and on the following day the united fleet put out into Lake Winnipeg, the object of their course being the Island of Elks, situated in the southern portion of the lake. That night an encampment was made, a hundred fires were lit, and the bugle notes of the sentries startled the solitudes. At noon on the following day the little army arrived at the mouth of the Red River, and after another day Colonel Wolseley and Mr. Commissioner Smith and their companions found themselves within six miles of Fort Garry. All that day the river banks had been alive with people shouting welcome to the soldiers; even "church bells rang out peals of gladness as the boats passed by." But this was through the English and Scotch settlement, the people of which had, as we have seen, grown disgusted with the tyranny of Louis Riel, the Dictator and "New Napoleon."

What had happened since Mr. Smith had left Fort Garry? The Commissioner's friends soon flocked about him with detailed accounts of the situation down to date. Riel still held his own within the walls of the fort, and in spite of his diminished power and influence, grave fears seem to have been entertained that he meditated some alarming step.

"I hope," said one citizen to Mr. Smith, "that you will induce Colonel Wolseley to exercise the

gravest caution. Riel is a desperate man and meditates, you may depend upon it, some desperate act. If he is not now planning a fatal ambush for the troops, he intends to mine the Fort, allow the Colonel to take possession of it, and then blow it up."

Mr. Smith listened patiently enough to all these alarming theories, and while he duly related to Colonel Wolseley the popular impressions of Riel's schemes, he himself was incredulous. Nevertheless, before proceeding farther, several officers and men carefully reconnoitred the woods, but without meeting with a trace of either Riel or his followers. That night a camp was formed for the last time on the west bank of the river, and "what a night of rain and storm then broke upon the Red River Expedition, till the tents flapped and fell and the drenched soldiers shivered, shelterless, waiting for the dawn. The occupants of tents which stood the pelting of the pitiless storm were no better off than those outside; the surface of the ground became ankle deep in snow and water, and the men lay in pools during the last hours of the night. At length a dismal daylight dawned over the dreary scene, and the upward course was resumed." Yet the rain continued in torrents, and with water above, below, and around, the expedition approached its destination.

MOUNT SIR DONALD

THIS MOUNTAIN IS THE MONARCH OF THE [illegible]

Some two miles north of Fort Garry the Red River makes a short bend to the east, and again bending to the west forms a projecting point or neck of land known as Point Douglas. This locality is celebrated in the history of the North-West as the scene of a grim battle, or rather massacre, in 1816, when the voyagers and French half-breeds of the North-West Fur Company attacked the retainers of the Hudson's Bay Company, killing Governor Semple and about twenty of his men. It is here, where the usually abrupt bank of the Red River was less steep, that the troops were ordered to disembark from the boats for the final attempt upon Fort Garry. After a very brief delay all was in readiness, and the little army, with its two brass guns trundling along behind Red River carts, commenced its march over the mud-soaked prairie. The precaution had been taken of sending a company in advance the previous day with orders to stop any persons on the road going in the direction of Fort Garry, so that intelligence of the arrival of the troops might not reach Riel's ears.

Now a line of skirmishers was thrown out in advance, and the little force drew near Fort Garry. Some of the mounted men rode back to report that the place was apparently empty and the principal gate open. There was no flag on the flag-staff, and although the muzzles of one or two guns

showed through the bastions, there was no sign of a garrison. Thereupon two mounted men put spurs to their horses, and passed through the open gate at a gallop.

But in the meantime, in some manner, Riel, O'Donoghue, and Lepine, who constituted the "provisional Government," had been warned that the dreaded red-coats were close at hand. One of the conspirators afterwards said that, on receiving the intelligence, Riel turned deathly pale and trembled like a man with a palsy.

"It is too late now to make any defence," he cried. "We must fly now, and make terms afterwards."

No amnesty having been proclaimed, he doubtless feared the result of capture by the military authorities. Three horses were instantly made ready, and the trio of rebel leaders sprang upon their backs and rode away. The only eye-witness of their departure not implicated in their proceedings was a veteran Hudson's Bay factor who had recently arrived at the fort from the Saskatchewan country.

Opposite Fort Garry, on the Assiniboine, there was a ferry which was worked by means of a stout rope or hawser. This Riel, or one of his companions, cut when they had reached the other bank, thus preventing any immediate pursuit. Then the

three conspirators, who had brought a force of red-coated British soldiery six thousand miles from the seat of the empire to quell a rebellion, took up their position on the shores of St. Boniface and viewed from this safe distance Colonel Wolseley, Commissioner Smith, and the 60th Regiment march into Fort Garry.

When Riel perceived Mr. Smith entering the fort he clenched his fist and exclaimed, "There goes the man who upset my plans. Had I not listened to him there would have been unity amongst my followers, Bishop Taché could have made a better bargain for me at Ottawa, and those soldiers yonder would not have come here."

All this was perfectly true, and attested by the course of events and by subsequent disclosures.

As the principal representative of the Company, Governor Smith became the chief civil authority in Rupert's Land. The £300,000 for the purchase of the territory had changed hands, and the territory duly transferred to Canada. But the new Lieutenant-Governor, the Hon. Adams G. Archibald, had not yet arrived. Consequently Colonel Wolseley found himself in a predicament. As a military commander without civil authority, the only way for him to maintain his position was by the proclamation of martial law. But such a course as this might have led to disastrous results. His

decision was soon taken. He held that the Hudson's Bay Company was the only civil authority pending Governor Archibald's arrival. In Mr. Mactavish's house in the fort, therefore, he called upon Governor Donald A. Smith to administer the affairs of the territory.

The announcement of this decision was received with the greatest satisfaction by all classes throughout the new province. The citizens of Manitoba had not forgotten the eminent services which Mr. Smith had recently so ungrudgingly rendered as Commissioner from the Canadian Government, nor the tactful and masterly way in which he had steered his course between the rival factions. Even those who were inimical to the Hudson's Bay Company could hardly complain of a man who had offered to cut short his official connection with that body in order to further the interests of peace.*

Meanwhile the Union Jack had been hoisted over Fort Garry, a royal salute fired, and three cheers given for the Queen by the troops, joined by a number of the residents of the settlement. Thus was accomplished Colonel Wolseley's errand, truly an errand of peace; his gallant followers after an

* Colonel Wolseley had offered to take the post of Lieutenant-Governor, but Sir John Macdonald declined the offer.—*v.* the *Life*, by Mr. Pope.

arduous and dangerous journey through the wilderness, without firing a shot or sacrificing a life, had finished the task entrusted to them.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Smith, addressing a body of citizens who came to congratulate him on the successful termination of the rebellion, "it lies in ourselves to continue the work of pacification now so auspiciously begun. Let us all strive to banish discord and to make this new province a credit to the Dominion of Canada."

Four days later, on the 27th of August, the Ontario Volunteers began to arrive. These were soon afterwards followed by the Quebec battalion, and on the 2nd of September Lieutenant-Governor Archibald arrived at Fort Garry, a royal salute being fired in his honour.

Archibald was a Nova Scotia lawyer, of robust build and bluff appearance. He was a man of sterling honesty and common sense, and as a Reformer or Liberal had cut a considerable figure in the politics of the maritime provinces, both before and since confederation. The meeting between the new governor and Mr. Smith was of a most cordial character. "I yield up my responsibilities with pleasure," remarked the latter. "Yes," returned Archibald drily, "I really don't anticipate much pleasure on my own account."

His misgivings were well founded. Indeed it was

no ordinary task which lay before him, even with all the assistance which the prudence, courage, and sagacity of Mr. Smith were able to afford him. On the 6th of September he held a levee at Fort Garry in the house that had been occupied by Governor Mactavish, of which mention has previously been made, and which was afterwards known as Government House.

Colonel Wolseley, Governor Archibald, and Mr. Smith dined together in this house for the last time, pledging toasts to the prosperity of Manitoba and the Great Canadian North-West. The commander of the Red River Brigade then departed for the East with the 60th Rifles, Artillery, and Engineers, leaving the Ontario and Quebec battalions quartered at the Stone Fort in command of Lieutenant-General Jarvis, an Ontarian officer.*

In the meantime, what of Riel and his followers? No sooner had Colonel Wolseley arrived at Fort Garry, in the manner we have related, and Mr. Donald A. Smith been recognised by him as the chief civil authority, than a sudden revulsion of feeling seemed to take possession of the country.

* "The total expense of the Expedition was under £100,000, of which one quarter only was to be paid by England. There was no reckless waste either in material or money. It may be safely asserted that no such distance has ever been traversed by an efficient brigade, numbering about 1,400 souls, in any of our numerous little wars at such a trifling cost."—*Annual Register*, 1870.

The apathy and non-interference which had marked their conduct towards the half-breed Dictator seemed to be now replaced by active animosity and thirst for vengeance. The same delegation to whom we have noticed Mr. Smith addressing some pacific remarks on his accession to the duties of Acting Governor now loudly urged him to procure the instant arrest of the insurgent leaders. He was applied to during the next few days to issue warrants against Riel, Lepine, and O'Donoghue before they could escape from the territory. A weaker man would have complied with their clamours, in order to secure the goodwill of the English section of the community. But, on the other hand, Mr. Smith, who had not shut himself up in the fort, but had gone about noting the temper of the French inhabitants, was quick to perceive that all danger was by no means over, and that a chance spark might still produce an outbreak.*

* On the 27th August Governor Smith received the following letter from Archbishop Taché :—

"THE PALACE, ST. BONIFACE.

"DEAR MR. DONALD SMITH,—I am told that special constables have been sworn in the name of peace for the security and welfare of the country. I humbly beg that these constables (as well as the magistrates and justices of the peace) will not be used except to maintain the tranquillity against *actual* movements or disturbances, and that all and every one will refuse to act in reference to anything previous to the arrival of Her Majesty's troops in Fort Garry. I see a real danger in the gathering by you of a number of the same men you employed last winter; with a best will in the world you cannot

One of the French residents approached him and asked him if the promised amnesty for those who had participated in or supported "the provisional Government" had arrived. Upon Mr. Smith's reply in the negative this man appeared sullen and walked away. In the face of this condition of affairs, it would hardly have been prudent summarily to arrest, by civil process, the admired Dictator and his followers. Indeed, it was part of the policy of the Government at Ottawa that Riel should be allowed to escape into American territory.

It was a singular fact that Bishop Taché had, early in the previous June, made the promise in the name of the Canadian Government that all who had borne a share in the insurrection would receive a full pardon. It was the hope of receiving this general amnesty which quieted the followers of Riel, as it was disappointment at its non-appearance which rendered them sullen and uneasy.

have a fair idea of the disposition of the different sections of the population."

"The men here referred to," said Mr. Smith afterwards, "were those called 'loyal French,' and the Bishop was apprehensive that, as those men had assisted me in getting up meetings throughout the country, and in enabling me to make the explanations which I was desired by the Canadian Government to make, there would be danger of a collision."

Early in September the Archbishop again wrote to Mr. Smith to the same effect, and also impressed his views upon Mr. Archibald.

As events very quickly showed, Archibald needed all the sympathy and support of Mr. Smith in his new position. His arrival was by no means heralded with joy by the English-speaking or Canadian classes. Owing chiefly, no doubt, to the misrepresentations of the Opposition press in Canada, he was regarded as secretly favouring and sympathising with the French as against the English residents of Manitoba. If there were any basis for such an allegation, it was never evinced by his conduct as Governor, which was throughout evenly balanced between the two parties. But even he seems to have believed that the best thing which could have happened was to allow the leaders of the rebellion to escape from the country.

"If," said Governor Archibald in a letter to Sir John Macdonald, "the Dominion has at this moment a province to defend and not one to conquer, they owe it to the policy of forbearance. If I had driven the French half-breeds into the hands of the enemy, O'Donoghue would have been joined by all the population between the Assiniboine and the frontier, Fort Garry would have passed into the hands of an armed mob, and the English settlers to the north of the Assiniboine would have suffered horrors which make me shudder to contemplate."

In spite of Riel's asseverations of loyalty, Sir John Macdonald was not long in making up his mind

that the late Dictator was "playing a double game." His presence was certainly a menace to the peace of the settlement, which was in no condition to protect itself then in case of such an outbreak as happened in 1885. A secret arrangement was therefore made with Archbishop Taché to induce Riel to leave the country. The sum of $1,000 was sent to the prelate to pay the late rebel's expenses, but as this sum appeared insufficient, Mr. Smith, as Chief Commissioner of the Company, advanced a further $3,000 on behalf of the Government. At one time it seemed as if, in spite of Governor Archibald's assurances, this sum would go to swell the other losses sustained by the Company, and which Canada refused to pay; but it was ultimately refunded by the Government.

It was now in order to take the census of the province, whereupon writs were issued for the local elections. These were held on December 30th. Mr. Smith was asked to stand for Winnipeg for election to the first Legislative Assembly of the province of Manitoba. He consented, and in due course took his seat.

On the 2nd of March, 1871, the election of members to the Dominion House of Commons took place. Four members were to represent Manitoba.

A deputation of citizens waited upon Mr. Smith and begged him to consent to represent the division

of Selkirk at Ottawa. This was an important step, but already Mr. Smith was regarded as the leading personage, next to Governor Archibald, in the North-West, and it would have been difficult, had he so chosen, to decline the offer. But he had no intention of declining; he was flattered and pleased by the high opinion entertained of him by his countrymen. He agreed to stand, and after a brisk campaign was triumphantly elected.*

When, as Commissioner from the Dominion Government, he had left Montreal less than fifteen months before, little did he dream of the possibilities in store for him, less did he think of political honours. He had gone out amidst the snows of winter, traversing a desolate, almost impassable country, to endeavour to quell an incipient rebellion in a territory governed for nearly two centuries by his masters, the Hudson's Bay Company, in whose

* As shedding some light on the subsequent character of Mr. Smith's electoral campaigns, the following passage may be quoted:—"Representative institutions had been established in the new province of Manitoba, and an election for members of Parliament had just been concluded. Of this triumph of modern liberty over primeval savagery it is sufficient to say that the great principles of freedom of election had been fully vindicated by a large body of upright citizens, who, in the freest and most independent manner, had forcibly possessed themselves of the poll-booths, and then fired a volley from revolvers, or, in the language of the land, 'emptied their shooting-irons' into another body of equally upright citizens, who had the temerity to differ with them as to the choice of a political representative."—*Wild North Land*, p. 14.

service he had passed his youth and manhood. When that rebellion had had its day, and events had rendered it necessary for him to continue to represent the Company in the North-West, he could hardly foresee that he would have a career independent of that body and yet continue of it. Indeed, the turbulent meeting of the fur-traders at Norway House, over which he had presided, seemed to presage revolt from within, which would jeopardise the whole constitution of the North-West fur trade. Even if the Company continued to exist and prosper, the ancient hostility which had been fostered against it in the country seemed to render it in the last degree unlikely that any of its officers would ever be voluntarily chosen by the enfranchised inhabitants as their political leaders.

But in the short space of fifteen months the unexpected had happened. In the course of that time Mr. Smith had gained the confidence of the inhabitants; he had acquired a reputation for fairness and square dealing, as well as for those qualities of heart, mind, and purpose which denote the natural-born leader of men, and three months after the flight of Riel it is safe to say there was no more popular man, from Red River to the shores of the Pacific, than Donald A. Smith. He had by this time definitely decided to cast in his future lot with the North-West. He saw it already in his mind's eye a

great and prosperous country, demanding those advantages and presenting those opportunities which mark every undeveloped country whose natural resources are not matters of conjecture, but palpable and visible to the eye.

Nor was it long before his eye had seen and his brain was busy with schemes which were to lay the foundation of the fortune of the future millionaire.

It will be remembered that Mr. Smith, at the close of his official report as Commissioner, some months before, had advocated the formation of a force of mounted police for the maintenance of law and order. The new administration fell in with the suggestion, and a small body was gazetted almost immediately, the forerunners of the larger force shortly to be inaugurated, and which is to-day one of the great and one of the most admirable institutions in the North-West.

Mr. Smith had been all along convinced that the last had not yet been heard of Riel and his fellow-exiles, although Governor Archibald apprehended nothing further from that quarter, now that they had cleared out of the country.

The news that Riel and O'Donoghue had held a meeting of French half-breeds at Rivière Sale on the 17th September seemed to forebode trouble. A company of volunteers was despatched to the boundary line, to frustrate any attempt at any

second insurrection. At this time Mr. Smith had for his guest Lieutenant Butler, who continued to hover about Fort Garry and neighbourhood, undecided what new adventures to embark upon now that the Riel rebellion seemed to have ended in a fiasco. He was a very entertaining companion, and at that time particularly interested, as most men were in the wilderness, in the progress of the Franco-Prussian War. One evening after dinner the future distinguished British General somewhat startled his host by announcing his determination to return to Europe, resign his command in the British Army, and join the French forces. As he himself shortly afterwards transcribed this thought: "Why not offer to France, in the moment of her bitterest adversity, the sword and service of even one sympathising friend?" He confessed that "it would be at least congenial to my own longing for a life of service and my hopeless prospects in a profession of which wealth was made the test of ability. So as I lay there in the quiet of the star-lit prairie, my mind, running in these eddying circles of thought, fixed itself upon this idea. I would go to Paris."

Mr. Smith took note of the young officer's uncertainty, and resolved to detain him as long as possible in the country, where such abilities as he possessed would surely prove useful.

Who knows but what the Hudson's Bay Gover-

nor's action may have lost France a field-marshal, and gained the British Empire one of her most distinguished military commanders?

Several communications passed between Mr. Smith and Governor Archibald with reference to the way in which Lieutenant Butler's services could be utilised. The former represented that within the last two years much disorder had prevailed in the settlements along the line of the Saskatchewan, and that the "local authorities are utterly powerless for the protection of life and property within that region." Mr. Smith felt it to be absolutely necessary for the protection not only of the Hudson's Bay Company's forts, but for the safety of the settlements along the river, that a small body of troops should be sent to some of the forts of the Company to assist the local authorities in the maintenance of peace and order.

It was finally decided to send Butler into the Saskatchewan country to investigate the matter entirely from an independent point of view; first, whether troops were necessary; secondly, to what extent that dreaded scourge small-pox was prevalent amongst the native tribes, to enforce the liquor law, to report on the number, classification, and language of the Indians between the Red River and the Rocky Mountains.

"Take a couple of days to think over it," said the

Governor to Mr. Butler, "and let me know your decision."

"There is no necessity, sir," he replied, "to consider the matter, I have already made up my mind; I will start in half an hour."

Butler was absent for some months in the depth of winter. At this juncture, as it happened, a Council of Health came into existence in Manitoba, which despatched a surgeon to the small-pox country, leaving it to this gentleman to carry with him such medicines and comforts as he and the notorious Dr. Schultz should agree upon. Schultz, it is said, took it upon himself to supply this surgeon with a large quantity of brandy, whisky, and rum to the value of £120. When Captain Butler got into the country this handsome supply of "fire water" had been distributed, and he found the Indians and half-breeds, infected and otherwise, were for the most part in a brutal state of intoxication. Butler found it necessary personally to destroy a large quantity of this liquor, spilling it upon the ground, to the great chagrin and regret of the thirsty aborigines. As he said to Mr. Smith, "Here I go in with a law passed prohibiting this thing, and behold, only to find an officer of the Dominion using it very freely and giving it liberally to all about him."

"The scenes," said Mr. Smith afterwards, "at some of the posts, on account of this liquor, were

such as I do not care to describe"; but anyone who has ever seen or read of a debauch by a band of excitable red-skins can easily conjure up the picture. Mr. Smith years afterwards openly accused Schultz of this strange conduct, but the latter vigorously denied it. Mr. Smith, however, had made sure of his facts before he prepared the charge against his ardent political rival and antagonist.

Mr. Smith, at no period of his régime in the North-West, desired, on behalf of the Company, to evade any of the responsibilities, moral or otherwise, of that body. Nor did he neglect to facilitate every inquiry and promote every project looking to the amelioration of the North-West.*

An old resident of the country, long hostile to the

* As we have seen, one of the first steps Mr. Smith took was to put down the liquor traffic with the Indians. It had been charged that the Hudson's Bay Company was at the bottom of all the mischief, and that they despatched enormous quantities of intoxicating drinks into the North-West. Although this was unfair and untrue, Mr. Smith had a rule passed by the Council, which was law to the Company's people, that not a dram of intoxicating drink should pass the boundary. From that time not even a few gallons of wine or brandy were permitted to go in by the officers of the Company. So strictly were the orders enforced that a small quantity of wine brought out in a Company's ship to Moose Factory was actually returned to England. When Governor Archibald, in October 1870, appointed Mr. Smith to the North-West Council, his first act was to have this prohibitory law carried out in the name of Canada, as well as in that of the Company. This law is still known as the Smith Act.

Company's rule, once told the writer, first of the suspicion and then of the astonishment and admiration which the measures of the new Hudson's Bay administrator evoked.

"At first," he said, "I was considerably puzzled; I knew it was only natural that the Company, having sold out its whole territorial rights for a million and a half dollars, should abandon the leading features of its old policy. But when it came to courting inquiry and helping rather than retarding the progress of the territory it had sold, it seemed to be playing rather a deep game. The only solution I could think of was that Governor Smith was acting somewhat recklessly, less in the interests of the London Company than the wintering partners, and that his conduct, which offered a strong contrast to that of his predecessors, would not be relished in England. But I soon saw that the Company's affairs were now in the hands of a strong man, who intended to have a deep personal stake in the country and who already regarded it as his home.

"At the first election I voted against him for the Legislative Assembly, because I had not met him and misunderstood and mistrusted his policy; but luckily I could quickly repair my error, and I voted for Donald A. Smith as our first representative in Parliament."

The new North-West was now waking up with a

vengeance. Now, if ever, was the time when every faculty should be on the alert if advantage was to be taken of the opportunities which were daily arising, or if you were to be thrust ruthlessly aside in the onward march of the pioneering legions.

There was something in all this to remind the visitor of the gold rushes in California or in Australia in 1849 and 1851. The name and fame of Manitoba rang throughout the world. Stout yeomen, pale students and professors, struggling tradesmen, wandering prodigals, shrewd speculators heard of the new country, and tiring of nearer and meaner hazards, started off to begin life anew in the new province situate in the heart of the great continent. But vast indeed was the difference in the conditions of Manitoba and California or Australia twenty odd years before. This time the magnet was not gold—but land. No one knew what the new North-West might become—all hoped it might grant them that opportunity for which they had waited all their lives, and which had somehow always evaded them.

It is certain that a great change had been wrought in the locality. Men in quest of fortune—many of them desperate—all of them feeling the reaction of their new environment, cannot congregate in numbers for the purpose which had caused the majority of these men to leave their homes in the east without presenting a spectacle far different from a quiet

English or Canadian village. When Mr. Smith returned to his constituency of Selkirk after his first session as member of the Dominion Parliament, he was struck by the change which the country presented from that which had first met his eyes at the close of 1869.

"Two years," says one graphic writer of that time, "had worked many changes in scene and society; a railroad had reached the river; a 'city' stood on the spot where, during a former visit, a midnight storm had burst upon me in the then untenanted prairie. Three steamboats rolled the muddy tide of the winding river before their bluff, ill-shapen oars. Gambling-houses and drinking-saloons, made of boards and brown paper, crowded the black-mud-soaked streets. A stage-coach ran north to Fort Garry, 250 miles, and along the track rowdyism was rampant. Horse-stealing was prevalent, and in the 'city' just alluded to two murderers walked quietly at large. In fine, the land which borders the Red River, Minnesota, and Dakota had been thoroughly *civilised*."

This is exaggerated and satirical: but wholesome order was soon to be evolved out of the undoubted chaos. It is a commonplace in the North-West to assert that to no man was this gratifying result due more than to Donald Alexander Smith.

CHAPTER VI

A FIGURE IN PARLIAMENT

IN describing the memorable meeting of the last Council of Rupert's Land, allusion was made to Mr. Smith's projected mission to London in 1871 to adjust the claims of the wintering partners of the Hudson's Bay Company before the Board in London.

Sir Stafford Northcote had succeeded Mr. Goschen (now Viscount Goschen) as Governor of the historic corporation, and it was quickly found that the proposition of the factors and traders to share in the purchase money as Canadian indemnity was one which had never entered the minds of the English shareholders, and consequently caused them one and all the deepest perturbation. It seemed to them monstrous that the body of working merchants and officials in the North-West should seriously set up a claim to participate in the ancient assets—the dead stock of the Company. They seemed to overlook the fact of the Deed Poll of 1834, whereby the members of the fur trade were made partners in the concern; they seemed, too, to be oblivious of the

fact that they were really themselves a practically unnecessary factor in the operation of Hudson's Bay commerce. That commerce would go on if the Company in Leadenhall Street were to retire from business to-morrow — and it would go on in the hands of the same men who control it to-day. As Sir George Simpson had made it evident, the right hand of the Company—its power to barter, and if need be, to strike—was now in Canada and not in England. And if this were true in Simpson's time, how much more was it true since the transfer of the Company to outsiders in 1863?

But in spite of all this, the shareholders for the most part indignantly denied the right of the wintering partners to any portion of the £300,000 received from the Government of Canada in return for the cession of its chartered rights over the soil and inhabitants of Rupert's Land. It was gravely argued that this consideration which had been purchased by Canada was one with which the wintering partners had nothing to do: it lay quite outside their privileges and their just claims. The Company proper had never parted with its dead stock to its employees, whom, in imitation of the co-operative principle of the North-West Fur Company, it took into a kind of partnership in 1821 and confirmed by the Deed Poll of 1834. It had only agreed to share the yearly profits of the actual

sale and barter; the agreement took no cognizance of those intangible but valuable assets, such as were granted to the Company under the Charter of King Charles II.

The representative of the fur-trading officers quickly made himself master of the situation. He soon saw what opposition he had to encounter, and he resolved to meet it in the most direct fashion. Several conclaves of the committee and shareholders were held to discuss the matter, and they were not always conducted with peace or characterised by sweetness and light. Mr. Smith, facing the body of English shareholders in the great fur Company, undertook to convince them that the claims of those for whom he appeared were founded on truth and justice.

It soon became obvious to the most grasping of his auditors that if the Company should imprudently deny these claims they could no longer count upon the loyal services of the factors and traders who composed the fur trade of the north. These men were truly in themselves the Hudson's Bay Company: they were no longer dependent upon Leadenhall Street; if they were not rich enough to supply the capital themselves there were plenty in the country who would have done it for them; and in any case their personal credit with the community was such that they need fear no rivals for some time to come.

Sir Stafford Northcote was early convinced of the unwisdom of combating the claim put forward by Mr. Smith. After some stormy meetings the delegate from Rupert's Land gained the day. Compensation in the sum of £107,000 was given to the officers for the relinquishment of their claims, and a new agreement, called the Deed Poll of 1871, was entered into on their behalf.

In November, 1871, Sir Stafford Northcote, in his report to the Company, said:—

"Since the holding of the General Court on the 28th June, the Committee have been engaged in proceeding with the reorganisation of the fur trade, and have entered into an agreement with the chief factors and chief traders for revoking the Deed Poll of 1834 and settling claims arising under it upon the terms sanctioned at the last General Court. They have also prepared the draft of a new Deed Poll, adapted to the altered circumstances of the trade."

The circumstances of the Company's trade were indeed altered. It ceased to be a governing institution and descended into the status of a private trading body, with a capital of £1,700,000. But what influenced its character more than anything else was the feature of land sales. It had now an interest in one-twentieth of the land within the fertile belt, and with the growing settlement and

prosperity of the North-West these lands—millions of acres—increased in value. The trading posts it continued to maintain scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the American border to the Arctic Ocean, but in the new centres of population and enterprise which now were springing up these trading posts assumed a more pretentious style and took on greater scope. The fur trade proper merely became an item in the transactions of the Company. Under the new Deed Poll the officers derived no profit from the land sales of the Company, but in other respects the new arrangement differed but little from that of the old Deed Poll. Up to this date the only ranks had been those of Chief Factor and Chief Trader. Now two new grades in the Company's service were created, namely that of Factor and Junior Chief Trader, which permitted the appointment of a large number of young men, who were constantly applying to be taken into the service and who could while in their youth adapt themselves with more facility to the new requirements and new circumstances of the Company.

All this having been achieved, it became necessary to appoint a Chief Commissioner to assume control of the Company's affairs in the Nort-West, as provided for by the terms of the Deed Poll. There could hardly be any doubt as to the individual best fitted for the post, and accordingly Mr. Donald

A. Smith received the appointment before he left London. Every shareholder who had made his acquaintance had been deeply impressed with his bearing and his knowledge of affairs, and consequently all were satisfied that the business could not be in abler hands.

The Report for July, 1871, showed a considerable loss on the trade. "This very unsatisfactory result is due," stated the report, "to several causes, of which the most prominent is the loss of property during the disturbances at Red River, which has affected the accounts to the amount of about £30,000. A claim for compensation has been presented to Her Majesty's Government of the Dominion of Canada, and is still under consideration, but as yet the Committee have not received any satisfactory answer to the representations which they have made upon this subject and upon the Company's claim to interest upon the purchase money withheld by the Dominion from the 1st December, 1869, till the 11th May, 1870."

In vain did the Company endeavour to obtain a settlement of these claims, and at length was forced to relinquish all hope of doing so, thus becoming losers to a considerable extent by the insurrection of Riel and his companions.

In the first year of Mr. Smith's régime a marked improvement in the Company's affairs was declared,

and in the Report for 1873 the Governor states "that the Committee have not failed to instruct their officers to render every assistance in their power to the Canadian Government in all measures adopted with a view to the development of the resources of the country, feeling that the interests of the Company are in this respect identical with those of the Government." This, of course, was, as we have seen, Mr. Smith's policy from the first.

After turning over the administration to Governor Archibald, Mr. Smith, in his threefold capacity as member of the North-West Council, member of the Provincial Legislature, and member of Parliament, took a somewhat prominent part in the local politics of the province, just then principally concerned with the aftermath of the Riel rebellion. The people of Eastern Canada, and particularly of Ontario, could not understand the necessity for virtual oblivion, if not a formal amnesty, in the matter of the execution of Thomas Scott. Their press, pulpits, and platforms cried aloud for vengeance on the murderers, regardless of the bloody complications which any vengeful measures might bring about in the sister province of Manitoba. Indeed, the Ontario Legislature went so far as to offer a reward of 5,000 dollars for the apprehension and conviction of Riel and his associates. To the members of the Legislature at Winnipeg this proceeding appeared as an unwarrantable inter-

ference in its own affairs, and in consequence a resolution was introduced by Mr. Clarke's Government resenting the action of Ontario, and carried by eighteen votes to five. Whereupon Mr. Smith introduced the following resolution in the Legislature:—

"That whereas during the period intervening between the passing of the Dominion Act and the temporary government of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories, when the same should be united to Canada, and the date when the union actually took place, very serious troubles occurred in the country now known as the province of Manitoba: and whereas Her Majesty's Imperial Government is the only authority competent to deal with this grave question; and whereas, in the interests of peace and good order, it is not only desirable but requisite that steps should be taken to settle and set at rest all questions connected with such troubles: Resolved therefore that an humble address be presented to Her Majesty the Queen praying that Her Majesty would be pleased to command that this House be made acquainted with the action already taken or which it may be Her Majesty's Royal pleasure to take, with the view of satisfying justice and the best interests of this country."

Mr. Smith's resolution struck right at the core of the facts of the Scott murder, and exposed clearly

the law and the logic of this memorable transaction. When the offence was perpetrated by Riel, Canadian jurisdiction was not established; the province of Manitoba did not exist. Riel and his "provisional Government" were therefore responsible for their actions to the Imperial authorities, and the immediate ministers of the Queen of Great Britain were the only ones who could properly punish or condone those actions if contrary to law. The resolution was passed without a dissentient voice, and the address was duly drawn up and forwarded.

On his arrival in Ottawa as representative of Winnipeg and St. Johns, Mr. Smith was warmly welcomed by the political chiefs of both parties.

The greatest interest and curiosity were manifested when on March 29th, 1871, before the Manitoba Bill had received the Royal Assent, the new member for Selkirk, introduced by Sir George Cartier, took his seat immediately behind Dr. Tupper. Mr. Mackenzie, the leader of the Opposition, called attention to the fact that the member "who had just taken his seat did so under the Act," the confirmation of which was now sought for at the hands of the Imperial Parliament; and as doubts existed as to the propriety of any member taking his seat under the Act, he thought that, following a precedent set by Government themselves lately, the matter should be referred to a Committee. At the same time the leader of the

Opposition added that his party divested themselves of all responsibility after having given this notification.

Sir George Cartier replied that Mr. Smith had properly taken his seat under an Act which had met with the sanction of the Imperial Government. At the same time, if the Opposition wished to raise the question of privilege with regard to the assumption of a seat in the House by the member for Selkirk, the Government would be ready to discharge their duty, and advise the House with regard to the law as it was to be applied in the present case. The subject was then dropped without any exhibition of ill-feeling, although one obscure member had gone about hinting that he would move for the expulsion of the "member for the Hudson's Bay Company." He thought better of his threat; but it is singular to note that the incident associated with Mr. Smith's first taking his seat in the House was the prelude to a lifelong personal friendship between Mr. Alexander Mackenzie, afterwards Premier of Canada, and himself. The former was often his guest, and when he had long resigned the cares of office and of politics, it was Mr. Smith who received him and his friends at Silver Heights, Winnipeg, during the ex-Premier's visit to the North-West.

It is also significant that the first vote of the new member was immediately concerned with the great

trans-continental railway, of which he was to prove the active protagonist, and whose completion was literally to be the work of his own hands. In the debate on the Bill for the admission of British Columbia, a Nova Scotia Liberal (Mr. A. G. Jones, of Halifax), in view of the great burden which would be entailed on the country by the proposed railway, moved an amendment looking to a suppression of the scheme. One of his supporters (Mr. Dorion) quoted from a report of Mr. Fleming characterising the Pacific Railway as a "commercial absurdity." It was altogether impracticable. "If," said this member, "confederation must be had in some direction, better have it with Newfoundland or Prince Edward Island than with a body of mere roving adventurers." Mr. Smith voted against the amendment, and subsequently for the Bill. A little later he consented to act as sponsor in the introduction of his fellow-member, Mr. Delorme, of Provencher, to the House, little anticipating the stir which this little act of his was to occasion. Delorme, a Red River French-Canadian, had been one of Riel's friends, and had been already accused in some quarters of being not only in sympathy, but in active collusion with the "New Napoleon" at the time of the troubles. No word was spoken on the day he took his seat, but the report spread throughout Ottawa and the country, and at last, on the 10th April, a Mr. Ross drew atten-

tion, in a crowded house, to the report that Delorme had been a member of Riel's Government, and, if so, was clearly guilty of the crime of high treason. This was not all. "It was also said," he continued, "that the honourable member had been a member of the court-martial which had condemned Scott. If so, the honourable member was guilty of murder." Whereupon a scene of great excitement ensued in the House, and Delorme, with a very white face, half rose and gesticulated violently in his seat, many French-speaking members appearing to sympathise with him. Continuing, Mr. Ross declared that there was a feeling among the people that anyone connected with such an atrocious murder should be brought to justice. He had heard that Riel was frequently in Manitoba, and he did not understand, if it were so, why the local government had not arrested him.

How surprised the speaker would have been had he known that Riel had actually received money from the Government since his crime, to keep out of Manitoba!

Delorme duly declared, with great indignation, that the rumours about him were false. His statement that he knew nothing about the murder till two days after it was committed was received with cheers. "I had nothing to do with Riel's Council," he pursued. "When Mr. Smith was sent as Commissioner

by the Canadian Government to Manitoba I was a delegate to the Convention."

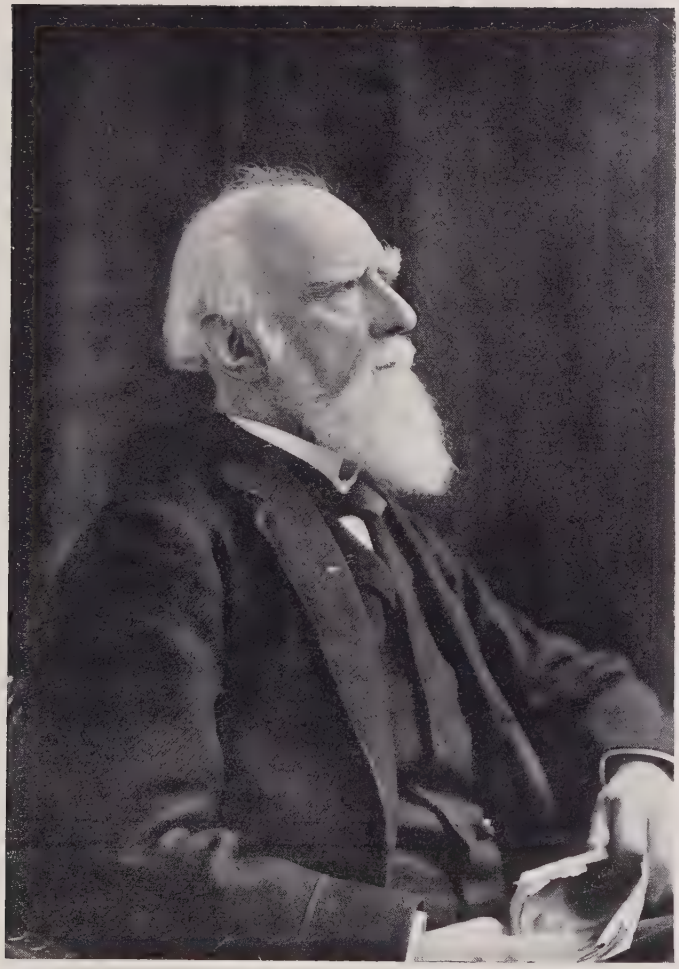
Attention was now centred upon the member for Selkirk. He was now expected to make his maiden speech in the House. It was he who had introduced Delorme, and he felt that it was a matter directly affecting his honour. This first utterance is very characteristic.

An eye-witness in the gallery describes his appearance as follows :—

"A figure over the medium height, but looking taller from the alert, well-knit character of the frame, arises, and all eyes are directed upon Donald A. Smith, the senior member of the brand-new prairie province. No one can scrutinise the massive head and face which crowns this figure, with its high forehead, strong nose, long upper lip, and pent-house brows which jut out to twice the ordinary dimensions, without making up his mind that the member for Selkirk is a man out of the common. His report on the Riel disturbances led us to expect something from the chief officer of the Hudson's Bay Company in this session. But whether he speak or not, it is an open secret that the Government relies chiefly upon his knowledge to bring order out of chaos in the new territories."

"It would," he began, "be in the recollection of most of the members of this House that a certain

party in Red River got up a Council last winter, which was called the 'provisional Government.' That was composed of Mr. Riel and several French members. With that Council, he was convinced, the hon. member in question had nothing to do. (Cheers.)" Mr. Smith then went on to refer to the events connected with his mission to the people of the North-West. "I agreed to the public meeting which was held on the 18th and 19th January. Members were freely elected to that Convention by both sides. The Convention met in February, and was occupied in discussing the so-called Bill of Rights. The discussion was as free and unrestrained as any discussion in the House up to a certain point. The hon. member for Provencher was a member of the Convention, and then, and not till then, had the hon. gentleman anything to do with the disturbance or insurrection at Red River. (Hear, hear.) I never heard anything mooted against Mr. Delorme until the other day, and certainly had I believed there was any foundation for such a charge, I would not only have hesitated, but actually refused to have been in anywise instrumental in introducing the hon. member before this House as I have done. I would have regarded it as unbecoming my position as a member of this House, and still more an insult to my honour, if I had thought the hon. member had been in any way



LORD STRATHCONA AND MOUNT ROYAL

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connected with the so-called court-martial. (Hear, hear.) As to who constituted that court-martial I do not know, but this I can gainsay, that Mr. Delorme was one of those people who arrogated to themselves the power to sit in judgment on a British subject and condemn him to death.

"There was a further Convention and delegation," continued Mr. Smith, "which was sometimes called the House of Assembly of Red River. To that also, I believe, the hon. gentleman had been elected, but elected by his parish. I took some little part in bringing that Assembly together. A great deal has been said about that—a great deal erroneously. What was done at that time was this: There was at that time a gentleman from Canada condemned to death. Intercession had been made for him by several parties, but without avail. At a late hour in the evening I visited those who were then in power, and it was given me to understand that they were absolutely in favour of the union with Canada, and merely desired to have the people of Red River come to an understanding exactly on what terms and conditions they were to enter the Confederation. I assented, so far as my assent was necessary, on behalf of Canada, to this Council being called, and further said I would go amongst the people and induce them to take part in this Council or Convention, but absolutely and only with the

view of making arrangements for a union with Canada. Of that Convention the hon. member for Provencher was also a member. I believe that having said this, I have said all that is necessary on the subject. There was, in the first instance, a Council called the 'provisional Government'—the member for Provencher had nothing to do with that. In the Convention of which the hon. gentleman was subsequently a member there were several gentlemen who took part in it, not simply because they happened to be present, but they actually took a more active part in bringing matters forward than the French-speaking members, and there can be no imputation against their loyalty. (Hear, hear.) Further," concluded the speaker, "I might say that I fully believe there are none who deplore the sad events of last winter more than the people of Red River, not only the English, but the French-speaking people of Red River."

This speech was listened to with the greatest attention, and at its close was received with cheers. The inquiring member was, however, not yet satisfied. "The member for Selkirk had," he said, "distinctly stated that he did not know who composed the court-martial. If so, how did he know that the member for Provencher was not a member of it?" (Cries of "Oh, oh," and confusion ensued.)

Sir Francis Hincks: "It is entirely out of order.

The hon. member has asked a question and got a reply. What more does he want?"

Mr. Mackenzie immediately arose and declared his friend to be quite in order. The member for Selkirk had not in this particular corroborated the statements made. Whereupon Mr. Macdougall, glad of an opportunity to avenge himself upon someone associated with his late discomfiture, moved that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the allegations. "This House," he declared vociferously, "must be relieved of the disgrace and dishonour of receiving amongst its members anyone guilty of these offences. If it is true the hon. member for Provencher had never been connected with Riel's Council, it should be proved and made plain in the most public manner. The hon. member's mere statement was not sufficient." Turning to Mr. Smith, the ex-Governor said, with what he intended to be cutting emphasis, "As for the hon. member for Selkirk, he will see that when his speech is published his statements are not quite in conformity with some of the facts which have been made public respecting this North-West difficulty."

For answer Mr. Smith smilingly declared that the honourable gentleman seemed to take upon himself the championship of the North-West people. As for what he himself had said, every statement could be substantiated.

Mr. Edward Blake interposed to say that the distinct statements made by the two Manitoba members were to his mind quite satisfactory, and this view was supported by other members.

But Mr. Macdougall would not withdraw his motion. "I have," said he, "no desire to see the hon. member found guilty, but I will show the House a photograph of Riel's Privy Council, in which the picture of the hon. member for Provencher appears to prove the charge. Here is a Pierre Delorme, a member of that Council. Was this Pierre Delorme, a member of this House for Provencher?"

This caused a sensation. In the midst of it Delorme was heard to declare that he had no objection to have the matter tried. He happened to be present with a number of Indians when the photograph referred to was taken, and his picture was among the number. There were several there who were not connected with the Council, and he was amongst these latter. "I never," he reiterated, "was a member of Riel's Council." The photograph, out of which political capital was sought to be made, was handed around to several members. It was instantly seen and pointed out that it contained photographs of Mr. Spence and others, who were known to have had no connection with Riel's Council, and this both Mr. Dorion and Mr. Smith

commented on. After considerable heated discussion, Mr. Macdougall offered to withdraw his motion, but the House would not allow this, and it was put and lost by a two-thirds vote. Many of the members afterwards went over and shook hands with Delorme, who afterwards expressed his gratitude to Mr. Smith for the chivalrous way in which he had stood by him.

On another occasion Mr. Smith inquired of the Government if they intended to provide for the regulation of trade in the North-West Territories, and also what steps they intended to take regarding the traffic in intoxicating liquors, which was being carried on by Americans to the demoralisation of the Indians.

The Governor in Council, it was responded, had power to deal with these matters, and Mr. Smith's representations would receive attention. Whereupon Mr. Mackenzie, the leader of the Opposition, asked what regulations were in force. The minister replied that before the union regulations had been made by the Hudson's Bay Company, but he was not aware of their nature. He referred to the member for Selkirk as knowing more about the matter than anyone else. Sir Francis Hincks remarked that he thought Mr. Smith had more papers and knew more about North-West affairs than the Government. There could be little doubt that this was the exact

state of the case, for as yet Sir John Macdonald and his colleagues had had no time to ascertain the conditions and needs of the new territories. It was therefore necessary for them to take counsel of Mr. Smith and the other officers of the Hudson's Bay Company and the missionaries before formulating any policy for the management of the latest acquisition to the Dominion.

Consequently Mr. Smith at once became a figure of peculiar importance at Ottawa. In the first place, he was the official head of the fur trade, the lineal successor of Sir George Simpson, who for forty years had wielded an almost autocratic power at Montreal and Fort Garry; and the fur trade had not yet lost its prestige and glamour in the minds of men in civilised haunts. Furthermore, he represented a community upon which the attention of the whole people of the Dominion, and indeed of the empire, continued to be fastened by reason of the exploits of Riel and his half-breed following, and also because of the prominence it occupied as the newest British province and as a promising field for settlers and capital.

A little later in the session (April 11th) the question of the murder of Thomas Scott arose, and a motion was made that the murderers be sought out and punished. It was commonly rumoured, according to Mr. Bowell, that Riel and the others were in

Canadian territory. Moreover, it was pointed out that Bannatyne, "whose former connection with Riel was notorious," had been made postmaster of Winnipeg; and Spence, the former editor of the new *Nation,* Riel's mouthpiece, was another of Governor Archibald's appointments.

Sir George Cartier replied for the Government that Canada had no jurisdiction in the North-West at the time of the Scott murder, and that it had no cognizance of Riel's being at present in Canadian territory. When it became alleged that the Hudson's Bay Company had entered into a conspiracy to prevent justice being done to Scott's murderers, Mr. Smith felt that he could not let this charge rest, especially as it was chiefly aimed at himself. He therefore arose in his place and said:—

"Sir, I was present at Fort Garry when Thomas Scott was murdered. I did all in my power to save the life of that poor man. When I was vested with the chief civil authority after Riel's departure, a number of excited people—some forty or fifty of them—came to me asking to be sworn in as special constables to arrest the murderers. They said, 'We will go to shoot them down, but not to take them in any other way.' In fact, they demanded a warrant to commit murder. I refused to give them such a warrant. They afterwards, it is true, obtained one; but by that time the murderers had escaped. In reply

to the other charges, I would say that as to Mr. Donnell, one of those appointed to office, he was never friendly to Riel, and had, in fact, been at one time imprisoned by the rebel chief." Mr. Smith also defended Bannatyne and Spence as not being implicated with Riel, and his defence gave umbrage to the impetuous Dr. Schultz, who said he regretted that a member from Manitoba should have thought it necessary to "stir up a dirty puddle."

"As to the statement of the hon. member respecting the application made to him for a warrant to arrest Scott's murderers, I was not in the province when that event occurred, but I hold in my hand evidence in the shape of an affidavit from one Thomas Lusted, reciting the facts connected with the case and affirming his belief that Donald Smith was anxious to give Riel and Lepine time to escape, and have been ready to let this drop. But if Mr. Smith wishes to refer to it, it is my duty to place the facts of my party before the public also."

"Could I," asked Mr. Smith, "have given a warrant under such circumstances? I put the question to the hon. member and to the House. Dr. Schultz has mentioned Lusted—does he know that on the very evening of the same day Lusted admitted to me that a warrant should not have been issued under the circumstances I have related? When these men applied for a warrant, the Lord Bishop

of Rupert's Land and a number of the most respectable men in the place were present."

One of the members declared that after reading Mr. Smith's report his opinion of Riel was "a thousand times worse than it had been before." Others proclaimed that Riel ought to be arrested, and that if the authorities allowed him to remain at large they were deserving of all censure.

The motion was lost.

Nevertheless, the belief in the supposed complicity of the Hudson's Bay Company, or at least the criminal acquiescence of their officials, in the original outbreak at Red River was very general. A day or two later Schultz spoke at great length on the question of pecuniary indemnity to the sufferers from the rebellion, which was virtually an attack upon the Company. In the temper of the House it was clear the Company would never receive a penny of the losses it sustained. Mr. Bowell even went so far as to say that he "looked upon any claims by the Hudson's Bay Company as a mere piece of impudence, inasmuch as they had, in his opinion, been instrumental in causing the insurrection." Mr. Smith, forced to vote in a small minority chiefly of the Opposition, saw that nothing was to be gained just then, but asked "that a full investigation should be made into all the circumstances connected with the rebellion in the North-West. It was due to

the people of the North-West and the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company who had been so greatly maligned in connection with this affair."

Nevertheless, on the following day (April 13th) he turned his attention to a matter upon which he felt some representation ought to be made. Throughout Manitoba were scattered old settlers of 1812 and 1820, who were not half-breeds, but of English and Scotch birth and parentage. "These men," said he, "have done a good deal of service to the country, and have helped to form the community, and were entitled to as liberal treatment as their children, the half-breeds. Would not therefore the Government extend the grant of 1,400,000 acres of lands to these pioneers who were excluded therefrom under the new Manitoba regulations?" But Sir George Cartier scouted the idea, at the same time admitting that the lands the Government proposed to turn over to the half-breeds were unencumbered by any conditions as to settlement.

In fact, Mr. Smith's position soon grew to be a very awkward one. When the insults and insinuations of certain honourable members were intolerable, and he rose to repel them, every statement he made was regarded as a defence of the Hudson's Bay Company. On one occasion when he rose to reply to Dr. Schultz, the ex-Governor Macdougall cried out:—

"I object to this irregular proceeding. Why, the people of this country will soon come to regard the hon. member for Selkirk as the representative of the Hudson's Bay Company sent to this House to rehabilitate them before the Dominion." (Cries of "Hear, hear.")

Times and opinions have changed, and we now see the Company required then no rehabilitation from outside; but prejudice was strong, and old calumnies die hard.

In the next session (1872) Mr. Smith turned his efforts to enlarging the trade and immigration of the North-West. He sought to obtain from the Government what he conceived to be a necessary regulation with regard to Americans residing within or entering the territories. He thought it only fair that these should be placed on an equal footing as regarded trading relations with the Indian population as that on which British subjects stood within the Indian territories of America.

While animated by no petty bias against Americans, he did not believe that they should enjoy privileges inimical to Canada. The introduction by them into the North-West of intoxicating liquors was opposed to all principles of moral law and order. "Although," said he, "the laws of America provide against such introduction into her own territory, yet it is well known that the people of the States are

able to trade largely with the Indians in arms and liquors. The Company had entirely prohibited such trading. This had operated most beneficially, and British subjects never traded with the Indians in such things; but the Americans did so to a large extent, and the evil may prove very great if something is not done to put a stop to this very unsatisfactory state of things." Sir George Cartier for the Government agreed that the Americans should not enjoy greater privileges than British subjects in trading with the Indians. The matter was a very important one, and should be looked into at once.

During the session of 1872 an Act was passed to provide for the government of the territories by the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and a Council of eleven members. In the following January the first North-West Council was gazetted, of which Mr. Smith was a member.

They met for the first time on the 8th of March, at Fort Garry, and to show the circumstances under which some of the members attended on this occasion, we may mention an experience mentioned by Mr. Alexander Begg. A century and a half ago in Great Britain it was considered a memorable feat and a notable illustration of his zeal for parliamentary duties that a Scottish member should traverse a distance of 600 miles in mid-winter — at no time really severe by comparison in these islands—from

his Highland constituency to his seat at Westminster.

To attend this meeting, Chief Factor Christie travelled 2,000 miles, from Fort Simpson, on the Mackenzie River, to Fort Garry, by dog train, the journey occupying fifty-five days of actual travel. His French half-breed driver ran or walked the entire distance on snow-shoes, often going ahead of the dogs, "making track" for days in succession.

When Mr. Smith stood as a candidate for re-election, as a supporter of Mr. Mackenzie, in 1873, he was opposed by a gentleman named Wilson. The contest was of the most heated description: there were even riots and burnings in effigy, and a great deal of vituperation. At one of the meetings a speaker, whom we may call Wiggins, although his patronymic was even less euphonious, undertook to create a prejudice against the holder of the name of Smith. As a sample of eloquence inspired by Bourbon whisky and a close study of the speeches of the late Daniel Webster, the following extract is diverting:—

"Smith! Why, fellow-citizens, who is Smith? What is Smith? Is the palladium of our destinies to be entrusted to Smith? What has Smith done that he should seek to grasp the Ark of the Covenant with one hand and with the other wrestle for the sceptre of the Almighty? Smith, why Smith isn't a name, but an occupation!"

A reply to this tirade was soon forthcoming from the other side :—

"My opponent, boasting the classic name of Wiggins, and championing the honour of another patrician named Wilson, has ridiculed you for giving your vote to the ablest man in the settlement. He asks, Who would vote for Smith? Well, gentlemen, you cannot go far wrong if you always vote for Smith, wherever you are, or for whatever office he is running. If you want boldness and bravery, vote for the eminent Captain John Smith; if you want the inventor of the most stupendous system of political economy, vote for Adam Smith; if you want higher wit than was ever vouchsafed to man, give your vote to Sydney Smith; and if you want Scotch ability united to Canadian patriotism, vote for Donald A. Smith."

It is not at all surprising to learn that the speaker sat down amidst cheers. In the end Mr. Smith was triumphantly elected.

CHAPTER VII

BATTLES WITH DR. SCHULTZ

WE now reach an interesting and significant passage in Mr. Donald Smith's career, for it may be said to mark the beginning of his connection with the characteristic problem of the nineteenth century—rapid transit—a connection which was to lead to the building of a marvellous highway of steel and iron across the rugged breadth of a continent.

Up to 1872 all merchandise was freighted to Manitoba and the North-West Territories by means of peculiar and primitive vehicles known far and wide as "Red River carts."

The nearest point to Manitoba touched by a railway was the town of Brainard, in the State of Minnesota, which was then the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railway. Between St. Cloud and Red River the brigades of carts continued to make trips for the purpose of transporting the supplies demanded by the inhabitants of the province. The only steamer navigating the waters of the Red River was the *International*, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company, which carried only the Company's

goods. But suddenly an American steamer, the *Selkirk*, appeared heavily freighted with merchandise for the province. This circumstance alone would not have contributed to the complete breakdown of the cartage system; but it appeared that, according to American law, all goods passing through American territory intended for Canada were required to be duly bonded in the United States Customs. This law had been practically a dead letter so far as the Red River carts were concerned, but the promoter of the new steamship enterprise had found means to induce the American Government to enforce it. The result was that, having himself taken the precaution of entering bonds, and as neither the cart brigades or the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer *International* had complied with the law, the new-comer for a brief space enjoyed a handsome and lucrative monopoly. It is interesting to recall that the tariff levied from St. Paul to Winnipeg was 16*s*. sterling per 100 lbs. Moreover, it was payable in cash, whereas the freight by carts had been payable half in cash, half in kind, a practice which considerably lessened the actual freight charges.

When Mr. Smith heard of this proceeding he was for a moment nonplussed. But with his surprise was mingled considerable admiration for the shrewdness displayed by his trade antagonist in his exploit.

"He must be a very able man," said he to a friend, afterwards his successor as Commissioner. Then he added, "We must not be caught napping."

The promptness of the Commissioner's measures must have convinced the owner of the *Selkirk* that he had met his match in shrewdness. The steamer *International* was instantly transferred to the Company's agent at St. Paul, Mr. N. W. Kittson, who was an American citizen. In this capacity he secured her bonding, and now instead of carrying merely Company goods, he announced the steamer as ready to transport general freights and passengers. Moreover, the moment the Manitoba merchants heard of the arrangement, they gave the preference to the new pseudo-American boat, and a powerful competition thus sprang up. But it was not destined to last long. Mr. Smith and his rival from over the border, Mr. Hill, met for the first time. A coalition was suggested and agreed to, and Mr. Kittson was appointed manager of the new steamboat company.*

In Parliament just then and for several sessions

* James J. Hill, the man whose fortunes were thus in a manner now joined to those of his future business associate, was by birth and early training a Canadian, being a native of the little town of Guelph, Ontario. He has left it on record, in a speech delivered at St. Paul in 1893, that "the one person to whose efforts and whose confidence in the growth of our country and success in early railway development is due is Sir Donald Smith."

the chief topic of interest related to the proposed railway across the continent. Mr. Smith always regretted, and said so repeatedly, "that party feeling should have been permitted in any wise to enter into the discussion of this subject—one of vast and general importance. It is," he added, "an undertaking of such magnitude as to demand the cordial co-operation of the whole country to ensure its successful completion, and which ought therefore to be regarded wholly outside of party considerations."

It is a curious fact that in the beginning of this great enterprise Mr. Smith was wholly opposed to its being undertaken by any but Government. He was, he said, against having the Canadian Pacific Railway built by any company, however honourable or competent.

In the light of after events, the following passage in a speech delivered April 5th, 1876, is of considerable significance:—

"The gentlemen who composed the [original] Company were doubtless men of the highest respectability, and some of them possessed great wealth; but I would ask Sir John Macdonald if Sir Hugh Allan, who presided over that Company, had not before leaving this country misgivings as to the success of the mission he was about to undertake, and he would ask others interested in the deputation to London whether within eight days after their

arrival they were not convinced that it was impossible to procure the money required on the terms proposed, and in fact nothing short of a guarantee from the Government of interest on the whole amount of the bonds could induce capitalists to embark on the enterprise?"

Indeed, Mr. Smith had been in England at the time, and well knew that capitalists would not touch the scheme of a trans-continental railway. Some might suppose that Mr. Smith came to change his view with regard to a company. He never did; but when each Government failed, when it was seen that unless private capitalists and private ability were to take the work in hand the project would never be realised, then it was that he came forward and, facing desperate financial risks, saved the great work.

But to return to the parliamentary session of 1873. As a consequence of what are known as the Pacific Railway scandals,* the Macdonald Ministry sustained a defeat in the autumn of that year. The country blazed with excitement. On the eve of the eventful 4th of November Mr. Smith was approached by certain members of the Government of the day, who were anxious to sound him and learn which way he intended to vote. He was requested to meet

* It was charged that the Government had received from Sir Hugh Allan certain funds for electioneering purposes in return for a charter to construct the railway. See p. 184.

three of Sir John's friends in the Speaker's room. A lengthy interview took place between this quartette, the upshot being that Mr. Smith declared that he could not vote to defeat the amendment which was to retain Sir John in power. What followed may best be related in Mr. Smith's own words:—

"I said I could not conscientiously support the Government, but I offered and proposed that there should be another amendment, and a very different one, *i.e.* the Government should frankly confess their fault to the House, and then, if the country condoned it, it would be a very different thing."

Afterwards, in response to a telegram, Mr. Smith met and was closeted with Sir John, but although the Premier used every argument, his supporter could not be induced to change his mind. This incident is mentioned here somewhat fully because it is impossible to conceive the degree of acrimony it afterwards occasioned in the ranks of the Conservative party, and especially amongst Sir John's intimate supporters, by Mr. Smith's defection. They were betrayed into the most violent abuse of the member for Selkirk. He was repeatedly called a coward, and his constituency characterised by the ex-Premier as "a rotten borough—an Old Sarum." He was accused—a certain member named Rochester was the organ of this school of opinion—of having shamefully sold his vote to Mr. Mackenzie because

Sir John's offer was not large enough. It was alleged that the member for Selkirk evidently desired to be made a member of the Privy Council of Canada, but that this was refused him by the Tories. The only basis for this latter assertion was that years before he was a member of the House, when travelling to Red River with Dr. (now Sir) Charles Tupper, he had intimated such a wish, as being a distinction arising naturally from his official position as head of the Hudson's Bay Company, and in view of the stake he had in the country. It would invest him with greater influence over the people nominally under his control; but so far as such a desire sprang from ambition, the charge may well be dismissed.

To return to the House of Commons. A division had to be taken upon Mr. Mackenzie's motion. "In a telling and dramatic speech," writes an observer, "Sir John threw himself upon the mercy of the House and the country. It became evident, as the debate proceeded, that one or two votes would decide the fate of the Government.

"At one o'clock in the morning of the 5th Mr. Smith got upon his feet. His utterance was to be oracular, for he and the people he represented were most vitally concerned in the building of a railway necessary to their existence. It has been his device never to allow anyone to know what he is

going to do until he has done it. When that has transpired it seems tremendously worth while—the only right thing to have done. This scene was to be a case in point. The House that had been before in a whirlpool of excited noise fell into a dead calm. Even until his closing words it was not evident whether he would adhere to his party or desert it."

The speech of the member for Selkirk was delivered amidst intense silence, broken only by hysterical bursts of applause. "For the honour of the country," he concluded, "no Government should exist that has a shadow of suspicion resting upon it, and for that reason I cannot give it my support."

He sat down amidst cheers, frantic and deafening from the Opposition, with which he had cast in his lot. "The House," continues an eye-witness, "broke up in disorder. In the corridors the members rushed together, cheering and hand-shaking, or reviling and threatening. Suddenly there was a storm centre round Mr. Smith, upon whom Sir John was bearing down. He was held back, gesticulating wildly. What he said never got into the blue books. His language was sometimes 'frequent and painful and free.' He cried out, 'I'd slap your face as quick as hell would scorch a feather.'"

As an instance of the perpetual suspicion to which the Hudson's Bay Company was subject, I may cite the case of the North-West telegraphs. Part of the

bargain made by Canada with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1869 was that the wire required for the new system should be purchased by the Canadian Government at cost price. When the invoices were duly presented to the Public Accounts Committee the price seemed to them enormous, being something like two or three times the cost of the ordinary wire. Naturally rumour ran that the Company had been discovered in a fraud. A public discussion took place, but there was no use attempting to stem the tide of public opinion without proofs; so Mr. Smith was fain to wait until an explanation, with the original invoices showing the price paid by the Company for the wire, were forthcoming from England. In due course Sir Francis Hincks made his statement for the Government. The charge was baseless: the Government had only paid for a very special kind of wire the actual price paid for it by the Company. But the wire had been bought in 1864, and the market price had sunk from £50 to £32 a ton. The Company had paid the higher price. In making an *amende honorable* in the House, Mr. Mackenzie said the suspicions of the Committee had been raised, but the matter was now satisfactorily explained. "No one really supposed that the Hudson's Bay Company desired to cheat the Government," he added, "but it was thought that a mistake had been made." Mr. Smith explained that the

homogeneous wire was selected by the Company for its great lightness. The weight which in iron wire would extend for one hundred miles, would, in this wire, be sufficient for three hundred.

In the House of Commons Schultz never lost an opportunity of attacking the Company or its representative, the member for Selkirk. He was what Carlyle called a "good hater," a man of strong prejudices, and he never weakened in his animosity towards the Company, unless, indeed, towards the close of his life, when, his rugged constitution shattered, his character lost its asperity, and there were few men whose untimely death in Mexico in 1896 was more universally regretted, even by the objects of his old-time malignity.

It would be unnecessary to capitulate all the passages-at-arms which occurred between Mr. Smith and Mr. Schultz, especially during the early sessions of the House of Commons. Sometimes, as in 1875, they were very fierce and bitter, and many of the political leaders unhappily took sides against the other party in this war of taunts and recriminations. It took Sir John Macdonald a long time to forgive the defection of his supporter, and, unhappily, on more than one occasion let fall from his lips an unparliamentary phrase a little too expressive of his feelings towards Mr. Smith, and which he afterwards sincerely regretted.

During this session it was declared that great dissatisfaction was felt by nearly every Indian with the Hudson's Bay Company's rule in the North-West. A Commission had been appointed to inquire into the matter, and Mr. Schultz expressed the fear that the Company or its officers exercised undue influence over the Government. One of Schultz's speeches attacking the Company was actually translated into the Indian tongue and distributed amongst the aborigines, with the avowed object of rendering them dissatisfied. Schultz always denied that this had been done under his authority; it was certainly a very imprudent proceeding. The peace and quietness which prevailed in the North-West under Mr. Smith's régime was sufficient evidence of the good relations which existed between the Indians and the Company's officers.

When the question arose of recouping Mr. Smith for the payment he, at Governor Archibald's and Archbishop Taché's instigation, had advanced to induce Riel to leave the country, Schultz violently opposed it. It did not seem to have occurred to him that it would be rather an undignified thing for the Dominion of Canada to allow one of its citizens to shoulder even so small a debt as £600, which properly belonged to the nation. Mr. Smith was never eager to obtain the money. He remarked more than once to his friends, "I don't care whether

Government reimburses me or not. I did what I did to avert further trouble and bloodshed, and because if I hadn't advanced the money no one else there would or could."

To this those who knew the circumstances cried, "No, no! You did a patriotic thing; you did it at the request of the Governor, and it would not be creditable to Canada that you should be this sum out of pocket."

But when the item came up in the estimates a number of the members, led by Mr. Schultz, thought they had here a weapon of attack not to be lightly passed by. They pounced upon it fiercely. They again charged Mr. Smith with complicity in the designs of Riel; they also asserted that he had paid the money well knowing that he would never get it back; and they now added the charge that he had purposely delayed payment for three years in order that the debt might accumulate interest! In reply to all these accusations Mr. Smith calmly read Archbishop Taché's evidence, taken before the North-West Committee, in the following words:—

"It was then that I saw Lieutenant-Governor Archibald on the subject of money. There were many conversations between the Governor and myself on the subject. He called in Mr. Smith, and in my presence asked if he could furnish the funds, which, of course, he said would be reimbursed by the

Canadian Government. I named at first £800 sterling to the Governor as the sum required by Riel and Lepine for themselves and their families. The Governor asked Mr. Smith to lend £800 sterling. I mentioned that I had $1,000 at my disposal, without mentioning the source, and thus the sum to be furnished by Mr. Smith was reduced to £600 sterling."

The member for Selkirk further explained that in an interview he had had with Mr. Archibald they had both expressed great fears that a raid would be made on the territories; a new insurrection might result therefrom, as the troops could not enter the territory during the winter season. They agreed between themselves that if the Canadian Government refused to recognise the payment they would each sustain half the loss. The Governor in his evidence had said he could not afford to lose that sum of money, and hoped he might get it out of the Canadian Government, but that he had not the slightest doubt it would be recouped. "For that matter," added Archibald, "I would guarantee it myself."

"If it comes to that," Mr. Smith had said in true patriotic spirit, "I will go halves with you."

Yet in spite of this evidence there were members who desired to evade payment. The true view was taken by both the Premier (Mr. Mackenzie) and Sir

John A. Macdonald, who told Mr. Smith at the time "that, of course, the Lieutenant-Governor had no authority and no instruction to make any payment, because the point arose so suddenly that he could not have any communication with the Government; but that if Mr. Archibald, as the representative of Canada in the North-West, took the responsibility of making a promise of payment on the faith of its repayment by the Dominion Government, Parliament would not allow the Hudson's Bay Company or Mr. Smith to lose the money."

Other members, such as Mr. Edward Blake and Mr. Tupper, also declared that the Government should not shrink from discharging such a debt of honour through fear that political capital might be made out of it. "This House," said the former member, "should respect that pledge and vote the money. The late Premier (Sir John Macdonald) would have been unworthy of his position if he had failed to respect that pledge, and that House would be equally unworthy if it refused to repay the money."

After two separate debates, in which certain members distinguished themselves for their acerbity, Mr. Smith was ordered to be paid by the overwhelming vote of the House, and also a further sum of £500, which the Government had authorised him to pay to the loyal French at the time of the rebellion.

THE ROYAL VICTORIA HOSPITAL, MONTREAL

It is characteristic of the man that the money thus received by Mr. Smith was expended in public charity.

In the meantime it had become clear that Mr. Smith's opponents and the enemies of the Company were determined not to rest until they had drawn their victim into a public controversy about the events of 1870, from which they hoped to extract something damaging to the object of their malevolence. The public were by this time, as may be supposed, heartily sick and tired of the subject, but Mr. Schultz and his friends showed no sign of a slackened zeal. In the debate in Parliament just referred to Mr. Bowell (afterwards Prime Minister) observed in justice to the member for Selkirk that he had expressed the most earnest desire before the North-West Committee to assist him (Mr. Bowell) in entering on a full examination of the connection of the Hudson's Bay Company with the troubles of the North-West, but that the Committee had refused to go into that investigation.

Charges were made then and at a subsequent time against Mr. Smith — charges of a most violent nature, and traceable, no doubt, to the rebel O'Donoghue. It was said that he had betrayed the trust reposed in him as a Commissioner, and that while in that capacity at Fort Garry conspired with others against the Government of Canada and Her

Majesty the Queen. In fact, certain newspapers animadverted to the charge in very indiscreet language, and one did not scruple to head its columns with—

"DONALD ALEXANDER SMITH A TRAITOR.
"W. B. O'DONOGHUE'S FATAL DISCLOSURES."

Mr. Smith afterwards said in public, "It is said by Mr. O'Donoghue that I recognised the 'provisional Government' then in the country as the lawful Government of the country. Such is not the case. It is true that on several, indeed on many occasions while there I met Riel and others; but those meetings were in pursuance of the duty I had undertaken as Commissioner for Canada. They were held solely and entirely with the view of inducing those people —the people of Red River—to come into confederation, and certainly not with the intention of advising them to remain, as they had been for some time, at enmity with the Dominion."

Nevertheless, the libels and scurrility continued to increase. A letter was written and published by a Sergeant Mulligan, who had been employed at Fort Garry at the time of the rebellion, corroborating O'Donoghue's accusations. Disregarding the Premier's advice that he should pay no attention to these charges, Mr. Smith resolved on confronting those members who were plainly seeking his ruin.

On the 2nd April (1875) he therefore arose in the House, and in the face of continual interruptions delivered a lengthy refutation of the charges brought against him.

"It is false that I advised the people to submit to the 'provisional Government.' In connection with this point raised by the honourable member (Mr. Schultz) I may say that the reverend gentleman who accompanied me, Archdeacon McLean, now Bishop of Saskatchewan, at the trial of Lepine, which took place last autumn at Fort Garry, took occasion specially to point this out, and to say that on every occasion when speaking to the people throughout the settlement I impressed upon them that they were not under any circumstances to address Riel, but to address in the shortest possible manner the notice of their choice of a delegate to Mr. Bunn, who really had been chosen by the Convention as the secretary. Mr. Bunn himself gave evidence to this effect before the North-West Committee. More than that, on one occasion when at Heddingly a petition was shown to me, which it was proposed to present to the so-called President of the Government of Rupert's Land. I told the person in whose possession it was that it should not be presented, and thereupon it was torn up. At the same time it must be remembered that while in Fort Garry I was virtually a prisoner and was under strict guard, and during a

certain length of time I was not allowed to speak to any individual other than the guards. It was hardly likely that I, a prisoner, could be taking part with those persons who kept me a prisoner and who were in insurrection."

Mr. Smith, in his speech, which was listened to in profound silence by a crowded House, went over the ground already traversed in these pages, reading out also several letters which had passed between himself and those in authority. One curious charge he felt himself bound to deal with. Mr. Schultz had alleged that a trunk full of documents belonging to the "provisional Government" had been thrown down a well on the hasty exit of Riel and his party from Fort Garry in 1870, and that this trunk was afterwards fished up and the contents burned by Mr. Smith's order. This charge had been made in the *Liberal* newspaper, Schultz's organ at the time. Mr. Smith had personally explained to this gentleman that the trunk belonged to a Company's officer named Watt, and had previously contained only that gentleman's clothes and letters. Watt had been removing from one district of the country to another; he had come in with the troops to Fort Garry, and in the confusion which then prevailed this box was taken hold of, and the clothes and other things being made away with, thrown down the well. It subsequently became necessary to have the well

cleared out to get water for the troops. A fire-engine was used for this purpose; the box was fished out, and Watt's papers being wet and perfectly useless, he determined to have them destroyed. Schultz promised to insert a denial of the story in the *Liberal*. Mr. Smith wrote the denial and the above explanation, but it never appeared. The letter was indeed set up in type, but was suppressed by Schultz's orders.

"I have," concluded Mr. Smith, "to express my great regret at having been under the necessity of bringing up these matters before the House; but I felt that these accusations against the Hudson's Bay Company were not made because those who got them believed them, but for the purpose of making this country believe what they themselves did not credit."

When Mr. Smith had finished Mr. Schultz immediately jumped up.

"I do not see," said he, "that the hon. member has shown us anything outside his own statement to controvert the statements made by W. B. O'Donoghue. We have simply the word of O'Donoghue on the one hand and of the hon. gentleman on the other. I am not going to express an opinion as to which of these gentlemen is correct."

This is hardly the correct tone of parliamentary

or of polite controversy—to compare the word of a blackguard apostate to that of a gentleman of Mr. Smith's character; and Mr. Schultz lived to see the folly and baseness of the comparison. But he was not content with this allusion.

"The hon. gentleman's mission in 1870," he continued, "was one which called for at least an ordinary degree of courage and competency; it was particularly unfortunate the hon. gentleman should have allowed himself to be chosen for such a mission—the duties of which he was so incompetent to perform." Schultz was proceeding in this strain when the Speaker called him to order. He bowed to the ruling, and then went on to charge his colleague, the member for Selkirk, with having purposely declined to avail himself of two different opportunities during his mission to crush the rebellion and establish a proper government. He did not act upon these opportunities, and was therefore guilty of cowardice and incompetency.

"Yes," repeated the member amidst considerable excitement, "I say cowardice and incompetency."

"The hon. member," exclaimed Mr. Smith, "has been pleased to use the words 'cowardice' and 'incompetency' concerning my conduct. He has also given us his version of events. Permit me to say he has entirely misstated what has occurred." Thereupon, in a succinct and convincing manner, he

related what had happened, giving dates and references. Schultz's reply promised further heat. Sir John Macdonald was called upon for a statement, but the Speaker ruled that the whole discussion arising out of Mr. Smith's explanation was irregular, and the matter was temporarily dropped.

But Mr. Smith's friends, even more than Mr. Smith himself, resented the extraordinary epithets which Schultz had seen fit to employ in the debate. To those who knew the member for Selkirk personally such epithets were ridiculous, but it was thought best that he should not rest silent under these imputations.

"I hope," said he, "that as the hon. member for Lisgar really is aware of the facts of the case, he will not fail in his duty to withdraw the expressions he used last night. He is well aware also that a few months after the disturbances he came to me, and was quite desirous, indeed anxious, that I should be returned as a member for the county I now represent."

"I deny it," declared Schultz.

"Ah, the hon. member had been willing to do so —for certain considerations." The House pricked up its ears, and the two members glared at one another. "The hon. member was quite ready, as he expressed it, to bury the hatchet as between the Hudson's Bay Company and himself, and that the

hon. member and myself should go hand in hand. Now, sir, if the hon. gentleman believed — if he sincerely believed — that I was a poltroon and recreant to my Queen and country, would he wish to have it supposed that he, a loyal, an honest man, came forward and desired, not to oppose, but to assist me at my election? The hon. member well knew that such statements as he had made would not be credited in the North-West; consequently he had never come forward there and made the assertions which he has made before this House. But it is, I believe, generally held in the country where the hon. member is best known that the hon. member is capable of making almost any assertion."

This was paying his opponent back in his own coin, and although Mr. Smith was obliged to withdraw his concluding expression, the House, which had not hitherto credited the "member for the Hudson's Bay Company" with so much vivacity, hugely enjoyed Mr. Schultz's discomfiture.

"When I went to the North-West as Commissioner from Canada," resumed Mr. Smith, speaking in a loud, clear voice, "I did not go there for payment. To the credit of the late Government let it be said that they would have paid me liberally, but I said I would not accept, and I did not accept a single dollar of the public money for my own use. But," added the speaker, raising his outstretched

hand dramatically in the direction of his opponent, whom he was resolved not to spare, "the insurrection which left me poorer has been a godsend to the hon. member for Lisgar. At the time the tumult arose he had nothing, while to-day he is comparatively a rich man—at the expense of his country."

Again bowing before the storm raised by Schultz's adherents, Mr. Smith withdrew this expression, which, however, he immediately went on to justify.

"I do not," said he, "question the propriety of the decision given by the Commission on Indemnities in respect of the claim of that hon. member, but if there is one thing more than another that has given dissatisfaction throughout the North-West, it is the large amount awarded to him, while other persons who had suffered severely had received a pittance."

The member for Lisgar sought to make an effective reply, but he failed to impress the House, who agreed with those present in the Gallery that the honours of the day rested with Mr. Smith, who had besides the last word.

"I do not think," said he, "it is necessary to say anything further, and if it were not unparliamentary, I would now throw back on the hon. member for Lisgar the imputation of cowardice which he has cast upon me."

The writer has heard it said that it was this speech of Mr. Smith's and his bearing during its delivery

that caused Sir John Macdonald to say, "Smith is a far better speaker than I had given him credit for. He has coolness and resource and plausibility, and just that amount of venom when he is attacked which a good statesman ought to have. We must certainly get him back in our ranks." A year before he had called him a "mild old gentleman, easily alarmed," a characterisation much farther from the truth than any of Canada's leading statesmen ever made. It seems odd, too, at the period of this writing, nearly thirty years later, to come across the epithet "old" as then applied to a man whose sphere of public activity to-day is probably hardly equalled for the number and variety of its interests in the whole British Empire.

Thus ended a memorable episode in the Canadian House of Commons; but the end of the duel between Mr. Smith and Dr. Schultz was not yet.

CHAPTER VIII

A MASTER-STROKE OF FINANCE

ABOUT this time a fresh opportunity of magnitude loomed up on the horizon.

Just across the Canadian border a bankrupt railway with 27,000,000 dollars' worth of bonds outstanding, dishonoured and almost valueless, stretched its unhappy length along the prairies west of the city of St. Paul. Many expectations had been reared upon this projected line of railway. It was to work wonders in the west. Its very name, the "St. Paul and Pacific," betokened the wide and ambitious sphere of its intended operations. It was to bring prosperity with the iron horse into the great grain and fur-bearing regions of the north. Two hundred and seventeen miles of it had been built. Its rails lay rusting in the sun and rain; the great project which had meant so much seemed doomed, indeed, already slain by a rival. But one man, scanning it eagerly, believed that its prospects were as bright, even brighter than ever. That man was Donald A. Smith.

As long ago as 1857 the American Congress passed

an Act making a grant of land to the Territory (as it then was) of Minnesota to assist in the construction of the Minnesota and Pacific Railway from St. Paul to the head of navigation on the Red River. In the spring of that year the Territorial Legislature incorporated the Minnesota and Pacific Railway Company with a capital of 5,000,000 dollars to build a road, whose branch connection was to lead close to the mouth of the Pembina River. But constant delays took place; nothing was done, and in March, 1862, the name of the Company was changed to the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company, and a further Act passed requiring the completion of the portion of the road between St. Paul and St. Anthony (now Minneapolis) by January, 1863, and to St. Cloud by January 1st, 1865.

The Civil War was, of course, responsible for the delay; the ten miles were duly finished in accordance with the provisions of the Act; but it was a long time before much headway was made with the larger engagement. Yet these ten miles formed "the first stretch in the network of railways which now covers the State of Minnesota." By 1864 the road had got as far as Elk River; in 1867 they had reached Lake Minnetonka; in 1870, Benson; and in 1871, when Mr. Smith became interested in Red River navigation, the rails were laid to Breckenridge, 217 miles from St. Paul. Here the work

ceased; the gangs of unpaid labourers returned sulkily to the south, or were given employment on the rival road.

For there was a rival; this is the solution of the collapse of the St. Paul and Pacific. A band of capitalists had been chartered in 1864, in the darkest days of the war, as the Northern Pacific Railway Company. Each company strove to outdo the other; each had its agents and wire-pullers at Washington, the idea being to secure greater grants of land from the Government in consideration of the public good wrought by the building of the road. But these land grants, often on a gigantic scale, although not quite so gigantic as we shall yet have occasion to note in the building of Canada's great highway, were yet hedged about with many conditions not always agreeable to, or to be fulfilled by, the undertakers of the enterprise. On March 3rd, 1873, the land grant of the St. Paul and Pacific was to lapse on account of non-fulfilment of the provisions of its charter. But the Minnesota Congress men made a powerful effort, and the grant was extended for nine months longer. Those who have read Mark Twain's amusing book, *The Gilded Age*, may perhaps recall the peculiar methods characteristic of American political and commercial life at that time; and it is not improbable that a great deal of energetic "lobbying" indeed was done to save

the pioneer railway venture of the North-West. But the competing road had then stronger backing. By May 1st, 1873, the Northern Pacific had built and was operating five hundred miles, and had earned its title to ten million acres of land. Faith in the St. Paul and Pacific was still strong, and the energetic and somewhat disreputable methods of its projectors kept its shaky condition from being known to the bondholders. Loan after loan was demanded and was forthcoming; until at last, when the road was mortgaged up to the last spike, the scales fell from the eyes of the luckless investors and the true state of affairs became known.

Who were the bondholders? Chiefly burghers of Amsterdam, who, casting their eyes on the map of America and the prospects of the Company, made up their minds that such a railway would pay handsomely. Events proved that they were not wrong; but in 1873, when certain facts concerning mortgages came to light, it did not seem possible for utter ruin to be averted. In August a receiver was appointed for one portion of the road, and there were then 56 miles of grading and 241¾ miles of rails needed to finish the work. The court ordered a deposit of 5,000,000 dollars in order to complete the line to St. Vincent within the time required to enable it to secure the land grant. The money was not forthcoming; nobody could raise even a tithe

of the sum. To accelerate the climax, the rival road also got into difficulties, and the great banking firm of Jay Cooke and Company closed its doors. Thus the St. Paul and Pacific was overtaken by hopeless bankruptcy. It was in good fellowship, for a wave of bankruptcy just then swept over both America and Canada, involving thousands in ruin.

The blow was keenly felt in Manitoba, where railway connection with the south had been so anxiously awaited. As yet the heart province of the Dominion was labouring under heavy commercial and industrial disadvantages. But still there was consolation in the shape of the railway from Canada, which was to pass through on its way to the Pacific. All eyes were turned upon Sir John Macdonald and his project for a trans-continental highway of steel. In a few weeks, or months at most, the Company was expected to get to work, and then came the blow, which seemed at one fell swoop to shatter all the prospects of the north.

One morning at Fort Qu'appelle Mr. Smith was breakfasting with the chief factor there when the news arrived of the urgent need of his presence in Ottawa. He travelled with unprecedented speed—relay after relay of horses being furnished—and arrived to record his vote against the Macdonald Ministry, as we have before related. This matter vitally concerned the future of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

To understand the reasons which induced him to vote against the Government it will be necessary to revert briefly to the great railway problem of that time.

It is worth while in this place recalling a little anecdote told of Mr. Smith shortly after the Ministry fell by a parliamentary colleague from the east. "Well, Mr. Smith," said this gentleman, "your constituency seems fated in the matter of railways. The Canadian Pacific is shelved for another generation, and no capitalist will ever touch that Yankee railway to the south of you; those Dutchmen would do well to come over and sell those rails for old junk." Mr. Smith smiled quietly.

"That railway isn't dead," he said. "A traveller isn't dead when he sits down by the wayside to rest, and you and I, my friend, will be riding across the continent on the Canadian Pacific within ten years." This latter prediction became fulfilled almost to the letter. It was in 1885 that Donald A. Smith himself drove the last spike in the mighty railway which now stretches from Atlantic to Pacific. Long before confederation of the North American possessions had become an accomplished fact, a small band of zealous, far-seeing men in Canada had perceived that, bound up with the political question, was a project of infinite commercial and industrial import-

ance, upon which the real prosperity and cohesion of the provinces would surely depend. They had to endure much opposition, and even ridicule, because the work of building so gigantic a railway by a country of only three million inhabitants seemed preposterous. Amongst these men was Mr. Donald Smith.

The Americans were fully aware of the advantages which the British Colonies would reap from such a railway, if confederation were ever brought about. When this consummation had finally been attained in 1867, believers in an inter-oceanic railway were grown more numerous. Nowhere was the scheme more popular than in the Far West, where its possibilities in developing the resources of the country and in cementing still further British unity were clearly appreciated.

The Americans determined, therefore, to forestall the Dominion of Canada in the project. The report of the United States Senate Committee on Pacific Railways, dated the 19th of February, 1869, contains the following significant passage :—

"The line of the North Pacific road runs for fifteen hundred miles near the British possessions, and when built will drain the agricultural products of the rich Saskatchewan and Red River districts east of the mountains, and the gold country on the Fraser, Thompson, and Kootenay Rivers west of the

mountains. From China (Canton) to Liverpool it is fifteen hundred miles nearer by the forty-ninth parallel of latitude than by the way of San Francisco and New York. This advantage in securing the overland trade from Asia will not be thrown away by the English, unless it is taken away by our first building the North Pacific road, establishing mercantile agencies at Puget Sound, fixing mercantile capital there and getting possession on land, and on the ocean, of all the machinery of the new commerce between Asia and Europe. The opening by us first of a Northern Pacific railroad seals the destiny of the British possessions west of the ninety-first meridian. They will become so Americanised in interests and feelings that they will be in effect severed from the New Dominion, and the question of their annexation will be but a question of time."

If anything were needed to act as a spur to the Canadian Government and to public opinion in Canada, this was calculated to perform that service.

When British Columbia decided to enter the Dominion, in 1871, it stipulated that the Government should secure immediately "the commencement of the construction of a railway from the Pacific towards the Rocky Mountains, and from such point as may be selected east of the Rocky Mountains towards the Pacific to connect the seaboard of British Columbia with the railway system of Canada; and

further, to secure the completion of such railway within ten years from the date of union."

Thus was Canada now pledged to the construction of an iron highway.

Surveys had been made, and in 1872 Sir John Macdonald began to take action. There were plenty of American capitalists who were ready to embark their money in the enterprise, but it was ardently desired that the road should be built by Canadians. It would be a piece of bad policy to allow Americans to gain control of "Canada's national highway." Sir George Etienne Cartier, then one of Mr. Smith's colleagues from Manitoba, was far from mincing his words on this head.

"*As long,*" said he, "*as I live and continue in the ministry, never will a d—— American company have control of the Pacific. I will resign my place as minister rather than consent to it.*"

Canadian capitalists soon became interested: two great companies were formed, who began to bid against each other for the right to build the railway. At the head of the Canadian Pacific Company was Sir Hugh Allan, the steamboat magnate, while the Inter-Oceanic was led by Senator D. L. McPherson; the subsidy by the Government was to consist of lands and money. The land grant was to be alternate blocks, twenty miles deep, along the line, and the money subscription 30,000,000 dollars. Experts

declared that the sale of lands in the alternate blocks retained by the Government would suffice ultimately to cover the cash subsidy. It was found unable to bring about an amalgamation of the two aspiring companies, so a way out of the deadlock was found by the incorporation by Sir Hugh Allan of a brand-new body, to whom the charter was granted. But the difficulties were not over yet. In April Mr. Huntington, member for Shefford, openly charged the Government with having sold the charter to Sir Hugh in return for large sums of money received for electioneering purposes. The accusing member declared that he could fully prove his grave indictment.

Sir John Macdonald himself moved for a committee of inquiry. Months of excitement and bitterness ensued, the Government authority diminished daily, and although the Committee's report expressed no opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the Government, Macdonald thought it prudent to resign. Alexander Mackenzie, the leader of the Opposition, was instantly summoned by Lord Dufferin to form a Government. The General Election at the beginning of 1874 resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Liberals. The blow, as we have already hinted, was a serious one for the North-West. It effectually retarded the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway for years, but at the same time

it spurred Mr. Smith to put forth every effort himself to bring about the completion of the line to the south, which had been abandoned by the Americans.

This railway had been completed from St. Paul to St. Cloud, north-west of Breckenridge. At the time of the failure Mr. Smith and Mr. Kittson, having satisfied themselves concerning the whole state of affairs of the insolvent St. Paul and Pacific Company, now resolved to attempt the acquisition of the franchise.

Mr. Smith believed that if the abandoned railway could be completed as far as the Canadian border, the Dominion Government would complete the connection to Winnipeg. It was a great opportunity, but to do it required enormous capital, and where should they turn to for it in that era of financial depression? Even the most sanguine capitalists of New York, Boston, and Montreal derided the idea, so scant was their faith in that distant country and its resources that such a railway could be made to pay. Mr. Smith and his companion first induced Mr. James J. Hill to join them, and afterwards—not until 1877—his relation, Mr. George Stephen, a merchant of Montreal. We have not had occasion to notice Mr. Stephen before in these pages, and it is only necessary to remark here that he was the son of Mr. Smith's aunt, Miss Elspeth Smith,

who married William Stephen, of Dufftown. As a young man he had gone to London and entered the employ of Messrs. Pawson, the linen-drapers, of St. Paul's Churchyard. He then emigrated to Montreal on the invitation of a relative, and there some years later became a partner in a local firm of drapers. He showed a turn for finance, and with the assistance and advice of his cousin, Mr. Smith, met with success. Both were early connected with the Bank of Montreal and kindred institutions, and were of constant mutual assistance to each other.

The first thing necessary was to negotiate with the Dutch bondholders, who were naturally not averse to obtaining some part of what they believed to be misspent capital.

"These four men, two of them Canadians by birth and two by adoption, by their splendid audacity and courage in raising the project from the ditch in which it had been abandoned by its former promoters, furnished a lesson in finance to the United States and the world that generations of Canadians may point to with pride. The history of the achievement reads like a modern fairy tale: it is certainly worthy of being classed as a romance of railroading." It involved the purchase of more than twenty million dollars' worth of bonds then in the possession of Messrs. Chouet, Weetjin, and Kirkhoven, of Am-

sterdam, and others. For these payment was to be made within six months from the date of final judgment in the foreclosure proceedings. It was to be made partly in cash and partly in share capital of the Company. The bonds were bought at prices ranging from eleven to seventy-five cents per dollar on their par value, and the purchase included all the mortgaged property, together with an immense land grant. If they failed in their engagements the promoters would forfeit the large sum of money deposited in the hands of the trustees.

On May 23rd, 1879, the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway Company, with Mr. Stephen as President, Mr. Hill General Manager, and Mr. Smith as Principal Director, was incorporated. This important *coup* created but little stir at the time in the financial world, and the London *Times* referred to the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway merely as "an obscure" Canadian railway. Not a single rail was laid on Canadian soil. Having thus accomplished the foreclosure, the new company boldly issued bonds to the amount of eight million dollars and successfully floated them in the money market of New York. Already the confidence of these four Canadians was justified, and by a slight expenditure of money, but a lavish outlay of brains, one of the most important railways on the North American continent passed into their hands. The road was duly completed, and

Manitoba finally secured a railway outlet to the south and east.

In describing this railway *coup* I have anticipated a little. Mr. Smith, although he had severed his active connection with the Hudson's Bay Company and resigned his seat in the Manitoba Legislature, still continued to be an assiduous attendant in Parliament at Ottawa.

Session after session witnessed Mr. Schultz and himself pitted against each other, much to the joy of the galleries.

"The hon. member for Lisgar," said Mr. Smith on one occasion, "has spoken of cowardice and incapacity in connection with this matter, but such an imputation would come home with more truth and justice against himself. When entrenched within his stronghold at the outset of the insurrection, why did he not keep his post with the body of men with whom he was then associated? Were the odds too great against him? If so, why so unmanly as to turn round and upbraid those who were in a weaker and far more difficult position than he himself when he surrendered his arms and was marched off to prison? . . . One word more. Before the real circumstances were known regarding the hon. member's conduct at Red River, the hon. member had been lionised in Canada, whither he had retired. He had been the recipient of valuable gifts, of

watches, of services of plate, with guns with which to shoot the members of the 'provisional Government' —(laughter)—and all sorts of nice things. This was very pleasant, no doubt, at the moment, but, sir, I hazard the suspicion that the hon. gentleman, since it is now known how little he deserved them, looks back upon these occurrences, these infelicitous trophies, with very little satisfaction. . . . The hon. member told the House on a former occasion that he had been whitewashed, in respect of the suspiciously large indemnity he had received, by a Committee of Public Accounts, but every member who has served on that committee knew that through that layer of whitewash there appeared many dark streaks."

Although Schultz well knew that Mr. Smith had been forced into making repeated explanations of a subject which was extremely distasteful to him—in fact, his chief assailants left him no other course—yet the former always chose to assume, for reasons of his own, that the member for Selkirk had a passion for the theme, and loved to unburden himself to the House. Schultz could use humour and satire, too, when he chose; and perhaps no speech which he ever addressed to the House caused such roars of laughter, in which the member for Selkirk joined, as his reply to Mr. Smith during the Amnesty Debate, March 23rd, 1876. Schultz had

deliberately charged Mr. Smith with being present at a certain illicit meeting in the North-West. A rejoinder was not practicable at the moment, but when it came it was crushing. The leading citizens implicated furnished separate and solemn affidavits that Mr. Smith had never been present. When these were read out to the applauding House an ordinary man would perhaps have shown discomfiture.

Instead of this Schultz rose with an assumption of amusement and surprise commingled. What, he demanded, had he done that he should be singled out as the victim of his hon. friend's peculiar views on North-West matters?

"Sir, the hon. members of this House will remember Coleridge's beautiful tale of the Ancient Mariner. This Ancient Mariner is described as a man of weird and unearthly aspect, over whose soul the shadow of some great crime rested, and who, at stated intervals, was compelled by some hidden remorse within to pour out his doleful tale and relieve his misery."

The amused House wondered what was coming next.

"Sir," continued Schultz solemnly, "it almost seems to me a parallel case with my friend from Selkirk, who in and out of session seems to be ever boiling and simmering with his oft-told tale of North-

West troubles. I feel, sir, much as the wedding guest whom the Ancient Mariner stopped, who exclaimed—

> 'I fear thee, Ancient Mariner,
> I fear thy skinny hand,
> By thy long grey beard and glistening eye
> Now wherefore stopped thou me?'"

This pen-picture of the member for Selkirk could hardly fail to provoke laughter.

"But," the speaker went on, in a deprecating tone, "he told his tale to the marines. Why should the hon. member afflict the House of Commons?"

As a matter of fact, Schultz long believed that the Red River rebellion was the result of a Hudson's Bay Company conspiracy, and that Mr. Smith was criminally implicated. The absurdity of the charge has been long since disproved. Apropos of the poetical comparison, Mr. Smith afterwards said that if his hon. friend likened him to the Ancient Mariner, he could liken *him* (Schultz) to another fictitious character—one who was always professing his readiness to fight—the redoubtable Sir John Falstaff.

CHAPTER IX

CANADA'S NATIONAL HIGHWAY

"*THE Canadian Pacific Railway would have no existence to-day, notwithstanding all that the Government did to support that undertaking, had it not been for the indomitable pluck and energy and determination, both financially and in every other respect, of Sir Donald Smith.*"

In these words did Sir Charles Tupper, in his speech at St. George's Club, London, in January, 1897, pay a tribute to his official successor as High Commissioner for Canada.

To all who have read aright the history of this great undertaking the tribute is deserved; and not Canada alone, but the empire which boasts this huge strategic work may read with satisfaction of how one strong, earnest, patriotic citizen guided the destinies of Canada's national highway to their fulfilment.

More important to Canada than the Via Flaminia to Rome, the Canadian Pacific Railway, as its national and Imperial highway, is Canada's greatest asset.

Upon its building depended her entire western

expansion, and her access to the commerce of the lands and peoples beyond the waters of the Pacific. Since confederation it had been the one vital issue in Canadian politics. "It constituted," says a Canadian writer, "a question upon which Governments arose and fell."

Following the defeat of Sir John Macdonald, the people of Manitoba impatiently waited for some announcement of the railway policy of his successor. Mr. Smith had, as we have seen, cast in his political lot with Mr. Mackenzie, but he was greatly disappointed when the latter came to declare himself on the subject of the proposed railway. It will perhaps be well to record Mr. Mackenzie's first utterance on this head to his constituents of Sarnia, an utterance which occasioned great dissatisfaction to the North-West and to British Columbia.

"One of the matters," said he, "which will be brought up will be the Canadian Pacific Railway. You are aware that during the discussion on the Bill I objected to the provision to complete the railway within ten years. Nearly three years of that time have elapsed, and we are bound by this contract to finish it within seven years and three months. I have always thought that a speedy means of communication across the continent was necessary for the good of the settlement and for the purpose of opening up the districts where we have great riches

undeveloped in the bosom of the earth. Without that communication their development cannot take place and immigration cannot be effected. It will be the duty of the administration in the first place to secure a means of communication to our navigable waters from Lake Superior to Fort Garry and the Rocky Mountains, at the same time commencing at the Pacific Ocean and constructing communication by the western slope. In the meantime communication would be afforded in conjunction with the American lines until we have means sufficient to accomplish the work. If we once have these regions accessible—that is, British Columbia and the North-West Territory—we can afford thus to expend money in constructing other portions of the road, which will be necessary to complete our great national highway across the continent; and I think it would be the duty as it will be the desire of the Government to develop any plan by which these results are to be accomplished."

In his subsequent speeches the new Premier reiterated the idea that delay was advisable in constructing the main line. It will be remembered that British Columbia, on entering the Dominion, had expressly stipulated for the building of the road. Mr. Mackenzie now proposed to modify these terms. He proposed a plan for utilising the Canadian water privilege of the great western lakes and rivers, thus

securing a means of trans-continental communication by these waters and the links of railway necessary to connect them as a summer route. In brief, the burden of the Liberal Premier's arguments was that Canada was too poor a country to carry out so great a project, and was likely to be for many years to come.

But in the speech from the throne, at the beginning of the session of 1874, the following paragraph appeared :—

"The late Government having failed in securing the prosecution of that great enterprise of the Canadian Pacific Railway, you will be called upon to consider what plan will best and most speedily provide means of trans-continental communication with British Columbia. The Report of the Chief Engineer will be laid before you, showing what progress was made during the past year with the surveys connected with the supposed lines."

Growing impatient, a deputation from Manitoba in the early days of the session waited on the Premier, to urge the speedy construction of the branch railway to Pembina. In reply he said that the Government was only waiting for the St. Paul and Pacific Railway Company to push this line through to the Canadian border. It may be mentioned that it was this utterance which first induced Mr. Smith to resolve upon the acquisition and

completion of that railway, whose affairs we have already described in a previous chapter.

A little later the Government brought in a Bill providing for the early construction of parts of the railway, leaving other parts to be built according to the state of the finances of the country. British Columbia from indignation passed into a state of anger. She pressed firmly for her rights, and one of the results of her agitation was the celebrated "Carnarvon Terms." When Mr. Mackenzie sought to evade these terms there were loud calls for secession in the province.

The Mackenzie Government vainly endeavoured to build the Canadian Pacific Railway as a Government work. Delay succeeded delay. "Mr. Mackenzie still clung to his pet theory of utilising the water stretches between Lake Superior and Fort Garry, and the waters of Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba and Saskatchewan River, as a means of communication with the Far West."

The truth is, he was not a sanguine man, nor was he far-seeing in the sense that Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Donald A. Smith were far-seeing. One of the first mistakes he made with regard to transit in the west was the "Dawson Road," from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg. A man once came into Mr. Smith's office at Winnipeg in a pitiable state of exhaustion and dilapidation. Folding his arms and fixing a

haggard gaze upon the Chief Commissioner, he said—

"Look here, Mr. Smith, you're our representative in Parliament."

"I believe I am, sir," was the answer.

"Well, look at me, ain't I a healthy sight? I've come by the Government water route from Thunder Bay, and it's taken me twenty-five days to do it. During that time I've been half starved on victuals I wouldn't give a swampy Indian. The water used to pour into my bunk of nights, and the boat was so leaky that every bit of baggage I've got is water-logged and ruined. But that ain't all," continued Mr. Smith's visitor, "I've broke my arm and sprained my ankle helping to carry half a dozen trunks over a dozen portages, and when I refused to take a paddle in one of the boats, an Ottawa Irishman told me to go to h—l, and said that if I gave him any more of my d—d chat he'd let me get off and walk to Winnipeg."

Mr. Smith looked deeply concerned. He had listened to numerous complaints on the part of travellers victims of the Government substitute for the Canadian Railway, but he never remembered a more extreme case.

"But what can I do for you?" he asked of the pitiable object before him.

"Do?" said the man. "Well, when you go to

Ottawa next time you can tell old Mackenzie that there's one man out here in Manitoba who don't hold much by his water route, and who wants that there Pacific Railway, and wants it badly; otherwise," he concluded, as he bowed himself out of the office, "you don't get my vote next General Election, that's all."

An amusing incident, although by no means so to the chief actor in it, occurred early in Mr. Mackenzie's administration. Mr. S. J. Dawson, the originator of this pleasant route through the wilderness, was sent officially to investigate the condition of affairs. When he had duly arrived at the north-west angle of the Lake of the Woods he was greeted by a huge assembly of disgusted and desperate patrons of the Dawson Road, stranded in the solitudes with the prospect of many hours' further waiting before they could continue their journey to Winnipeg. The result was he had a narrow escape from being mobbed. He set out rapidly, however, for Point de Chêne, and despatched a number of half-breeds with Red River carts to transport the starving passengers along the rest of the route.

But this was not the only matter upon which complaints grew rife. When work was at last begun on the main line of railway a report was spread about that the Government had decided to alter its course to a more northerly direction, so as to shut off

Winnipeg altogether. A mass meeting of the indignant citizens was held, and Mr. Smith was asked to serve on a delegation to Ottawa to protest against the arbitrary change of route. Not only was Winnipeg concerned, but all those settlements to the west which have since become prosperous towns and villages.

The delegation was courteously received by Mr. Mackenzie, but the Premier showed no inclination to recede from his intentions.

"I would rather," said he, "satisfy than dissatisfy the people, and for every thousand persons in Manitoba whom I would satisfy there are one hundred thousand in other parts of the Dominion I would dissatisfy. I would rather give the province a million of dollars than construct the main line thirty miles out of its way. The question of freight had to be considered." He and his advisers claimed for the northern route that it would shorten the route across the continent. In reply to this it was urged that the settlements in the latitude of Winnipeg existed through an understanding based on the Government maps, exhibiting the line as south of Lake Manitoba. To alter it to the north would constitute a breach of faith with the people of those settlements. One speaker asserted that many years must elapse before the railway could cross the Rocky Mountains; the line to the north would in the meantime "be of

no more use to the country than a music-book would be to a lark."

On the 5th April, 1875, the delegation of which Mr. Smith was a member made their report. "The undersigned," said they, "are of opinion that there is no probability of the Government changing the proposed route of the Canadian Pacific Railway unless it can be shown that the information upon which they are acting is incorrect, but are of opinion that it is the intention of the Government to cross the Pembina branch at Winnipeg and St. Boniface, and to connect with the main line on the same side of the river. It was urged upon the Premier that it would be advantageous to the country were the Pembina branch to be built, irrespective of the action of the Minnesota railway companies."

But the Liberal Premier could not be induced to take this view. It seemed to him, he said, useless to build a railway to stop short at Pembina, besides which it would be necessary that the Minnesota line should first be completed, in order that rails and locomotives for the Canadian line might be brought in. He added that as soon as the unfinished portion of the American line was completed his Government would be prepared to build the Pembina branch.

Mr. Mackenzie was not then aware that Mr. Smith and three other Canadians were already resolved to

obtain the control of the derelict American railway. As upon the completion of this line the immediate fortunes of the Canadian Pacific seemed to depend, there was every reason for straining every effort to bring about this result. Mr. Mackenzie soon began to weary of Government railway building. He advertised for tenders by a private company; there were no bidders. Mr. Smith no doubt felt the opportunity an excellent one, considering the land grants the Government was prepared to give, but he had, as we know, his hands full in another direction. Slowly, therefore, the work went on, and it was not until July, 1876, that the first locomotive was placed on the rails at Thunder Bay.

Two years later the uselessness of the Dawson road as a route for immigrants was so obvious that the Government was obliged to act.

In the meantime, in 1878, Mr. Smith and his colleagues had successfully entered into negotiations for the acquisition of the St. Paul and Pacific Railway. He now approached the Government with a view to establish continuous connection between Winnipeg and St. Paul.

It was arranged that the Pembina branch should be built at once by the Government and leased for ten years to the new company. This arrangement was put before the House and passed, but the Senate were in a different mood. They so amended the Bill

as practically to destroy it. Nevertheless, in May, 1878, a contract was made to finish the Pembina branch, but the defeat of Mr. Mackenzie's Government in October effectually stopped all further negotiations with the St. Paul and Pacific Company.

Altogether, when the Liberal party went out of office, there were not two hundred miles laid down of a road which was intended to comprise thousands. This virtual failure had cost Manitoba and the North-West a heavy price. It was a period of wholesale immigration to North America, and the absence at this favourable moment of railway communication to the Red River valley resulted in the loss of many thousands of settlers. It is now universally held that the Canadian Pacific Railway project was then passing through a crisis. That it could have been finished before Mr. Mackenzie went out of office in 1878 is our own firm conviction, but it needed a genius of an altogether different kind to disentangle all the loose cords which held it, to bind them firmly together, and, grasping the matter with no uncertain or faltering touch, carry it through to a successful fruition.

The general elections were held in October, 1878. The Conservative Opposition, led by Sir John Macdonald, went up and down the country denouncing in round terms the commercial and industrial policy

of the Liberal Government. As a consequence the latter was overturned by a huge majority. To Mr. Donald A. Smith the programme offered by Sir John Macdonald seemed to promise much for the country's advantage, and he therefore had no hesitation in returning to the ranks of allegiance. He offered himself for election for his old constituency, and was in his place in the House on May 10th, 1879, when his friend Mr. (now Sir Charles) Tupper, then Minister of Public Works, read out the new Pacific Railway policy of the Government.

When Mr. Tupper announced that the Ministry had decided to revert to their old policy and hand the work over to a company, there were few in the House who recognised in the member for Selkirk the prime mover and leading spirit of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. It will be remembered that a bargain had been made by the late Government with the St. Paul and Pacific Railway, whereby that corporation secured the exclusive privilege of running trains over the sixty-three miles of the Pembina branch for ten years. But at the same time the Government rather unwisely gave the contractors who built this branch until the close of 1879 to complete their work. As traffic was undertaken before the road was finished, it naturally went into the contractors' pockets. The result of this

arrangement was an almost complete fiasco at a critical season of the year, and the Government had no other course than to make a contract with another firm, Upper and Company, to equip and operate the road. This arrangement proved successful and profitable. The St. Paul and Pacific lent their co-operation, and trains were run through to St. Boniface from the terminus of the American road. A bridge had yet, however, to be built across the Red River to Winnipeg.

But although the new administration now decided to carry the main line south of Lake Winnipeg, it intended that it should pass through Selkirk, and not the city of Winnipeg.

Soon after the prorogation of the Dominion Parliament in 1879, the Premier and the Minister of Public Works left for London in the vain endeavour to seek British capital to carry out the great railway project which had been lingering so long. The utmost was done by these two able and patriotic men, but English capitalists turned away with a smile from a scheme which must have seemed to many of them almost foolhardy. A celebrated English financier long afterwards told Mr. Smith that when he first heard of the proposals to raise a loan to build a railway across the North American continent, he laughed aloud.

"'Good heavens!' I thought, 'somebody will have

to hold these Canadians back, or they will go plunging themselves into hopeless bankruptcy before they come of age.' I felt I would as soon invest in a Yankee 'wild-cat' mine."

Capital not being forthcoming, there was apparently nothing for the Government to do but to go on with the construction under their own auspices. Not merely in England was there distrust, but at home there were shadows and disappointments. The new leader of the Opposition, Mr. Edward Blake, now M.P. for an Irish constituency in the Imperial Parliament, boldly moved that to keep the country from ruin the British Columbian end of the road should be abandoned. It is true the amendment was defeated by eighty-two votes, but there were very few sanguine members on the Government benches.

The terms offered were not yet of a character to tempt Mr. Smith and his colleagues of the St. Paul and Pacific.

But the time was near at hand. In the summer of 1880 a syndicate was formed. It soon became rumoured that the heads of this syndicate were Mr. George Stephen and Mr. Donald Smith. On the assembling of Parliament on December 10th, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's contract was laid before the House of Commons. It bore the signatures of Sir Charles Tupper (representing Her

Majesty the Queen), George Stephen, and six other names of firms and individuals. But that of Donald A. Smith did not appear by reason of his own express wish. The absence of his name occasioned no real surprise to those who knew Mr. Smith's character. But the world at large, were it not for the many tributes to him as the prime mover in the undertaking, might have remained in ignorance of the part he had played.

Even now that he is credited with being its leading spirit, a great deal of misconception is rife as to the pecuniary profits he derived from his connection with the railway. I may mention that some time ago he said to me, "I have heard that people speak of the fortune I have gained out of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Let me tell you I would have been hundreds of thousands of pounds in pocket if I had never had anything to do with that enterprise."

The terms on which the syndicate took up the work were as follows: The railway to be completed from Montreal to Port Moody by 1891; the company to receive as subsidy $25,000,000 and 25,000,000 acres of land, in blocks alternating with Government blocks, along the railway; the company to receive all lands required for stations and workshops, with all the sections of the railway built and being built

by the railway, valued at $30,000,000; the company to have the privilege of importing free the materials for the road, and to be exempt from taxation for twenty years; no competing lines to be built in the North-West south of the Canadian Pacific and connecting with the American lines for a space of twenty years. In addition to these grants and privileges, Canada lent further aid to the company by means of loans and guarantees while the road was under construction. The terms, which on paper seemed so magnificent as to excite the active hostility of a large party in Canada, thus proved to be insufficient to meet the enormous liabilities involved in building.

Both Mr. Stephen and Mr. Smith were obliged to pledge their private fortunes to prevent the work from ceasing. Many are the stories current to-day in Montreal of meetings of the Canadian Pacific Railway Directors at that critical time in the early eighties, when the Board of Directors of what is now the greatest railway in the world used to meet and discuss the tightness of the money market with very blank faces. During one of these conferences Mr. Smith is said to have entered briskly. When he was made aware of the situation he instantly moved an adjournment.

"It is clear we want money," he remarked drily.

"We can't raise it amongst ourselves. Let us come back to-morrow and report progress."

According to this account, when the Board met on the following day the members regarded each other in dismay; each had the same story to tell of failure, until it came to Mr. Smith's turn.

"I have raised another million," he said slowly, in the characteristic Scotch accent which had never entirely deserted him. "It will carry us on for a bit. When it is spent we will raise some more."

In such manner and under such difficulties was the work carried on.*

These tremendous efforts of a financial kind were, as it fortunately happened, ably seconded by the man who had charge of the actual construction of the road. To Mr. (now Sir) William C. Van Horne's knowledge, zeal, and industry must be ascribed the rapidity with which the work was pushed forward. At last, on the 7th November, 1885, five and a half years before the time allowed

* "We had, of course, a good deal of anxiety while the work was going on, but we were sustained by the knowledge that it was approved of and supported by Canada as a whole, and that an important step was being taken, not only in developing the resources of the country, but also in bringing Canada closer and yet more close to England and our sister colonies, thus forming a means of cementing together the various parts of the empire."—*Lord Strathcona.*

DRIVING THE LAST SPIKE OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

NOVEMBER 7TH, 1885

NOTE.—THE FIGURES IMMEDIATELY BEHIND LORD STRATHCONA ARE THOSE OF SIR WILLIAM VAN HORNE AND SIR SANDFORD FLEMING

by the terms of the charter, the great railway was finished. At the little halting-place of Craigellachie, in British Columbia, was performed an interesting ceremony. Surrounded by a representative body of men, Mr. Donald A. Smith, with a few brief words of congratulation, lifted a hammer, and with the well-directed blows of a man not unaccustomed to manual exercise, drove in the last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Before nightfall of the day which witnessed this memorable ceremony a telegram arrived from the Queen, through the Governor-General, Lord Lansdowne, graciously congratulating the Canadian people on the national achievement, which Her Majesty was well advised in regarding as "of great importance to the whole British Empire."

To many it was only this ceremony at Craigellachie that awoke them to a realisation of what this great fur-trader had done for the work. Says one writer,* "Although Sir Donald A. Smith has never occupied any more prominent position in the Canadian Pacific Railway Company than that of a simple director (through his own desire), it is well known that his powerful hand was ever ready to encourage and aid in the great work. It was like the crowning act of his devotion to Canada and the North-West,

* Mr. Alexander Begg, *History of the North-West*, 1895.

therefore, when he drove the last spike on the Canadian Pacific Railway at Craigellachie."*

Canadians have reason to be grateful to Lord Strathcona for the efforts he has made for the promotion of immigration—that great and prime need of the Dominion. For thirty years those efforts have not been relaxed. He was one of the earliest to impress upon the Government the necessity of filling up the North-West; and to-day finds him still in what is the most effective official position in connection with the emigration of Europeans and the *migration* of British peoples into the fertile expanses of what used to be called the "Great Lone Land."

Once, early in 1877, there was a powerful agitation to relax the efforts of Canada to obtain more population, and Mr. Smith manfully resisted the views of those concerned in this agitation.

"I recognise," said he, "the necessity for economy in view of the reduction of revenue, but I sincerely hope the Government will be able to find some other means of effecting that economy than by reducing the vote for immigration purposes. I trust we are

* "It is impossible to travel from this city to the Western Ocean without feelings of admiration for the courage, and I am almost tempted to say the audacity, both of those who first conceived and of those who have carried to a successful consummation this great national work. The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway stands alone in the history of great achievements in railway building." —*Lord Lansdowne, in a speech delivered November*, 1885.

agreed as to the importance of filling up the country as rapidly as possible, and it would be a dire misfortune, not only for the North-West, but for Canada at large, if our efforts were relaxed to send emigrants there." . . . "While," he continued, "the railway approach by Minnesota is desirable, it was even more important they should have a rail route by way of Lake Superior, so that immigrants might not be subjected to the temptation to remain at points on the journey, to which they were at present exposed."

Inasmuch as Mr. Smith was personally interested in the Minnesota route, this patriotic view at once disposes of the spiteful criticism later directed against him, that his motives and actions were entirely governed by his "pocket." No more baseless charge was ever brought against a public man; and although many, for purely personal or party reasons, were temporarily led to join in this cry, Lord Strathcona's whole career of commercial enterprise and public and private benevolence evinces its utter falsity. At a later time it was charged that he had "made millions" out of the Canadian Pacific Railway, which he only undertook with his cousin, Mr. George Stephen (now Lord Mountstephen), to build because no one else in Canada was able to do so. As a matter of fact, Lord Strathcona once assured me he was hundreds of thousands of pounds *out*

of pocket through his connection with that gigantic undertaking.

Mr. Smith was from the first of the opinion that it was not alone necessary to grant immigrants facilities to get into the North-West; they should also be given every opportunity to acquire lands when they arrived. "It is a most unfortunate thing," he once said, "that Manitoba has been rendered one great reserve. Almost every section is reserved, not for settlement, but to keep out settlement. About one-third of the whole nine million acres in Manitoba is virtually a reserve at this moment, that is to say, all the lands easily accessible are taken up. I do not direct attention to this point in order to find fault with the present or with the late Government. It is to be regretted that occasion should be so frequently taken to convert almost everything which comes before the House into a party question."

He repeatedly urged in public and in private that there should be some means of preventing speculators from locking up whole townships, which there was a tendency to do, with a view to holding them until settlement in the neighbourhood would render them more valuable. This, in his opinion, and as events showed, really interfered very seriously with the work of peopling the country.

A few years after the organisation of the province

of Manitoba and its admission into the Dominion Mr. Smith saw that the growth of the mighty North-West outside the limits of that province rendered it inexpedient for it to continue to be governed as a mere territorial appendage to Manitoba. He therefore pressed upon the Government of the day the necessity for establishing a new and separate administration to the west, between British Columbia and Manitoba. In those days so few were conversant at first hand with the needs and conditions of what had been called for centuries Rupert's Land that it was natural that his proposition should excite opposition. Sir John Macdonald asked the necessity for this step. "I think," said he, "that that territory might well be governed from Manitoba without a separate Legislature. The constitutional Governor of Manitoba has so little to do he can economically enough for a good many years govern the whole of the territories. A separate Government is unnecessary."

But the member believed otherwise, and if the North-West Territories exist as a separate political community to-day, promising to be amongst the most opulent as they are the largest separate section of the Dominion, it is largely due to the persistent efforts for years of Lord Strathcona. He showed that a large population was rapidly settling at the north bend of the Saskatchewan River, where there

was a population of one thousand souls; at Bow River and beyond Edmonton and Fort Albert; while a vast territory was being developed in the Peace River district. The great argument against the Governor of Manitoba's governing so boundless a region was the relations with the Indian tribes. Constant negotiations and treaties were necessary, and the Governor could hardly be expected to travel hundreds of miles for weeks at a time on these peculiar errands of diplomacy. Mr. Smith advocated, therefore, removing the seat of government further west.

"It must be recollected," said he, in a speech delivered on this subject, "that in this portion of the territory the great body of the Indian population is found; these are very different to those in the south, and if there are any troubles to be experienced, danger is to be apprehended from the Indian tribes living on the upper portion of the Saskatchewan. I do not myself fear any such troubles, but many do, and I consider it only prudent to take the necessary precautions. I know," he continued, "there is a very large extent of country to the north which is as well suited for settlement as the portion to the south. Settlers will come both from the United States in the direction of Bow River, and also from British Columbia and the United States by way of Peace River, and it is absolutely

necessary that there should be some legal Government to give attention to any difficulties which may arise."

Mr. Smith's arguments prevailed. In the session of 1876 the Premier (Mr. Mackenzie) announced that they had decided to establish a separate Government, and that the probable capital would be at a place 250 miles from Fort Pelly and 550 miles distant from the city of Winnipeg. This to-day is Prince Albert.

It is hardly possible within the straitened compass of this volume to describe or even briefly refer to all the measures proposed or furthered by Mr. Smith for the betterment of that vast territory long known on the map as Rupert's Land. One amongst many were his untiring efforts to procure river navigation, notably of the Saskatchewan and Assiniboine. During Lord Dufferin's visit to Winnipeg in 1877 he read an address to the Governor-General, signed by numerous leading citizens, expressing regret that his lordship had to travel by waggon or carriage to Portage la Prairie instead of by the Assiniboine, which by a very small expenditure on the part of the Government would have been rendered navigable. He urged that obstructions on the waterways be removed, and although met by much opposition, finally carried his point, and steamers are everywhere to-day in the North-West. "The future,"

he said on one occasion, "might bring some means of cheapening the cost of transport by rail, but as matters stand now, even with the additional expense of a canal in the way, the transporting of goods will be much cheaper by water than by rail. If we can obtain both rail and water communication, our position will be much better than confined to only one means of transit."

Mention has already been made of the enforcement of the Smith Liquor Act throughout Rupert's Land. Excellent in principle, as time went on this absolute prohibition of liquor in the North-West became a nuisance, and Mr. Smith was himself one of the first to see this and try to temper some of the stringencies of his own Act.

"We did away with liquor," said he, "to save the Indian needless suffering. Now it is ourselves who are needlessly suffering; and the Indian—where is he?"

In 1870 there were thousands and tens of thousands of Indians in the North-West. There were not a thousand white people in the whole of that great territory outside of Manitoba.

"There was," said he, "no middle way of dealing with the subject; it would have been of no use then to impose a high duty upon liquors.

"There were at that time just one Customs-house and two Customs officers in the North-West, includ-

ing Manitoba; and they were at Winnipeg. On the other hand, you had a frontier of some 1,200 miles stretching to the Rocky Mountains, every portion of which could be passed just as easily as any high road in any part of Canada, and the Yankees were constantly addicted to passing it. The only thing was not to allow it to be introduced at all, and when it was found to spill it on the ground."

But such conditions could not last for ever.

"You have," said Mr. Smith, in answer to the Prohibitionists, "a large population there now. They are drawn from all parts of Europe and this country; they have been accustomed to have their wine and their beer, and it is a very difficult thing to change the habits of the people. Perhaps the very fact of forbidding them having any such drinks would have in itself a very great undesirable effect upon intending settlers."

This common-sense view prevailed, and the restrictions were removed.

In a public speech relating to the salaries of judges and civil servants of the Crown in Canada, he said:—

"I think we owe it to ourselves that the salaries of our judges should be increased; and while I hope I am as much actuated by a proper desire for economy as any member of this House, I should certainly

not be opposed to seeing the emoluments of the Ministers of the Crown and of our judges increased; but at the same time, we ought to exercise every care in introducing into every portion of the Civil Service those only who are fit to do the work to be assigned to them. If such care be observed, we should be able to pay well all those who are capable of doing and who do good work for the Dominion."

Yet on another occasion he himself observed:—

"When I went into the Far West to serve the interests of the country, although considerable expense was incurred, I wished to be so free and independent of the Government and of any party that I declined to receive anything whatever from the Government for any services I had rendered."

In an earlier chapter we have mentioned the interesting circumstance that Mr. Smith had, in the long years he spent in the bleak wilderness of Labrador, witnessed the gradual extinction there of the Eskimo, the polar bear, the walrus, and the wild fowl. Years later, on the opposite side of the great continent of North America, he was called upon to assist in framing measures to prevent the extirpation of that wonderful beast, the bison, or buffalo, as it is more commonly called. Yet in spite of public laws and of his own private efforts, the buffalo disappeared from the prairies, until in Sir Donald Smith's own possession was the final small herd of these once countless denizens of the West.

When Mr. Smith had first gone out to Red River buffalo were commonly seen to the east of that stream. Seven or eight years later they were only to be found by going several hundred miles westward. Not merely crowded towards the Rocky Mountains, they came to be attacked on the north by hunters in the new settlements on the Saskatchewan, while from the south the hunters of the Missouri made their onslaughts.

Added to these sources of diminution was the number slain by the Cree and Blockgeet Indians, who inhabited the buffalo country proper; and the wolves, together with the loss caused by drowning, made up the quota of destruction to be, according to Father Lacombe, a perfectly reliable authority, 160,000 annually. Indeed, it was prophesied that if the slaughter continued, in less than a decade the buffalo would be extinct, and this prophecy was not falsified. Mr. Smith repeatedly urged a law which would cause a cessation of this indiscriminate slaughter, and this was one of the few occasions on which he found himself in agreement with the member for Lisgar. That the Yankees were the greatest factors in the destruction was only too plain.

"The slaughter and disappearance of the buffalo," said Mr. Smith, in a speech delivered a quarter of a century ago, "was owing in a large measure to the inducements held out to American traders. A large

number of buffalo robes go to the other side, and while the Canadian trader loses profit the buffalo is gradually but surely being killed off. I hope the Government will be able to devise some means to exclude the ingress of American traders and also give protection to the buffalo. Canadian hunters and traders are not allowed to go into American territory."

But the required law establishing a close time for the buffalo came too late—the stable-door was locked after the horse had been stolen. A little later, although Mr. Smith frequently beheld the bones of the buffalo whitening on the plains, not a live buffalo could be seen for many hundreds of miles. There was no doubt that with the extinction of this animal, upon whom the Redmen depended for their staple article of food (known as *pemmican*), was connected the bloody uprising which occurred some years later (1885) in the North-West. It had been predicted that if the buffalo supply was cut off trouble would ensue, and this prediction also came true. When trouble occurred, however, it was not owing to misgovernment by, or to any grievance against, the Hudson's Bay Company. "The Americans," wrote Mr. Smith, "have had many such wars; but our action towards the Indians has been very different from that of America." "Under any circumstances," declared Mr. Schultz, "it is far cheaper to feed the Indians

than to fight them." Indeed, a distinguished American military officer once said that "it would be cheaper to board and lodge a whole tribe of Redskins at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York than to have war with them."

Once, referring to the late Lord Dufferin's (the Governor-General's) speech on Manitoba and British Columbia, in which he pictured in such eloquent terms the resources and future of the great North-West, Mr. Smith observed that a friend of his who happened to be in England soon afterwards, and who was in a position to meet a great many business men in London and on the Exchange, told him that it was no unusual thing to see gentlemen take out of their pockets a copy of that speech and make further inquiries about the North-West, of which they had hitherto heard so little. They said that it must be an admirable country when so spoken of by Lord Dufferin, and doubtless deserved all that had been said about it by His Excellency.

To evince his own ardent attachment for the beautiful West, take the following eloquent passage from one of Lord Strathcona's speeches fifteen years ago:—

"Anyone who has gone to Banff, and from one of the lower plateaux has looked down upon the fall immediately beneath, a fall of eighty feet or more with a large volume of water; who has looked on

the reaches of the Bow River, and on turning round has beheld the mountains towering heavenward, and not felt his soul elevated, not felt proud that all this is part of the Dominion, cannot be a true Canadian. Those who will travel westward will find that every inch of ground is a picture either of sublimity or of beauty, such as is not to be found elsewhere on this North American continent."

One of the "mountains towering heavenward" of an adjacent range, having an altitude of 10,662 feet and the tallest of the Selkirks,* has been fitly named the "Sir Donald," to commemorate the leading part he has played in the building of the railway and the development of the North-West.

As for Lord Strathcona himself, in spite of his Scottish origin, of those boyhood's years in Forres, and those three decades in the wilderness, in all the qualities which go to make up patriotism and good citizenship he was, and is, a "true Canadian."

* Mount Stephen, which derives its title and gives it to the peer of that name, closely approximates with a height of 10,425 feet.

CHAPTER X

RAISED TO THE PEERAGE

IN 1886, the year following the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, it was announced that Her Majesty had been pleased to bestow upon Mr. Smith a knighthood of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. For six years he had not been heard in the House of Commons, but in every other part of his sphere of activity Sir Donald Smith's vigour and energies had shown no signs of being relaxed. His commercial undertakings were on so considerable a scale that it is not surprising he should have been rated a millionaire. It was fortunate for the community that his growing wealth only served to increase his philanthropy. He had not long enjoyed his knighthood before his gifts began to assume gigantic proportions. The commercial capital of Canada was the especial object of Sir Donald's munificence. In conjunction with Lord Mountstephen he set apart, in 1887, the sum of $1,000,000 to erect a free hospital in commemoration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. Subsequently he and his relative gave $800,000 to endow the institution built on the

flanks of Mount Royal. It occupies one of the finest sites for a hospital in the world. "Behind rises the mountain terraced with lovely gardens, before lie the squares and steeples, the glittering river; and beyond that the misty champaign, with here and there a domed mountain, and at intervals a town or village marked by a breath of smoke or the steeple of a parish church that flashes like a poniard in the sun." The year before the corner-stone was laid the chief donor and his cousin were in England consulting Sir William Gull and other eminent surgeons about it and maturing their plans. When it was finished at last, in 1893, some of the committee wanted to mark the inauguration by a ceremony, and approached Sir Donald to this effect. "No," he replied, "I want no flourish of trumpets. Just open the doors when the building is ready and let the patients come in."

Could anything be more characteristic of the man?

It was in this jubilee year that Sir Donald returned to politics. "Sir John Macdonald requested me," he said afterwards, "I may say urged me, as a friend and as one who had given him very general support, to come forward as a candidate of the Conservative party. He did so in such terms that, taking this into consideration and looking to the kindness of my friends, I felt I ought to accede to their wish. Four years later it was very much the same, but

I certainly had not intended to present myself after that time."

Yet in 1895, when he said this, he was again elected as independent candidate for the St. Antoine division of Montreal, and elected by acclamation.

During the progress of his short but successful electoral campaign in 1887, Sir Donald Smith made a speech which even his critics could not but pronounce admirable, and this speech gained him many new friends.

"I am," said he in one passage, "disposed to judge of measures more than of men. At the same time, if a Government may have made some blunders I am not disposed to oppose them because of this. We know that success depends not upon absolute perfection, but that with individuals as with governments, to make fewest mistakes is the criterion of success."

Although since 1874 Sir Donald had ceased to have any direct connection with the management of the Hudson's Bay Company in the North-West, he had, as one of the largest shareholders, religiously attended the annual meetings in London and always given the authorities the benefit of his advice and lifelong experience. He was succeeded as Chief Commissioner at Winnipeg by Mr. Brydges, and in 1887 by Mr. Joseph Wrigley. But so intimate were his counsels that no one was surprised, on

the retirement of Mr. Eden Colville, in January, 1889, that he should be selected for the Governorship in lineal succession to the first ruler—Prince Rupert.

This must have afforded Sir Donald high gratification. He had now risen through every grade of the service — from apprentice - clerk in Labrador and resident governor of the fur trade—to the highest position of all. And yet this distinction, whose achievement would almost have appeared incredible to him as a young man, and indeed none had ever gained it from the ranks, was now soon lost amidst the multitude of other honours.

When Canada, and the whole empire, lost in 1891 that really great political genius, Sir John Macdonald, there were few who felt the loss more than Sir Donald Smith. The gulf created between them many years ago at the time of the Pacific scandals had long been bridged, and they were at the time of the Premier's death warm and intimate friends.

"One of the most pleasing things to me," said Sir Donald a few years afterwards, "is that Sir John Macdonald himself told me, and in the most kindly way, that he could never have thought so well of me had I supported him on that occasion. I believe that in the latter days, and for several years before we lost him, I was as much in his

confidence as any man inside or outside his Cabinet. I don't speak of mere political matters, but 'in his confidence,' I mean, as a friend."

It was in 1895–6 that the Manitoba Schools question became acute. The Dominion of Canada had in 1870 guaranteed to the French-speaking inhabitants of the province the same rights as to language, religion, and education as were enjoyed in Quebec. As time went on, however, it began to be seen that this arrangement was unfair to the province in which the English-speaking population were in an overwhelming majority and a very serious interference with its self-governing rights. Again the French and half-breeds were in a tumult; they clamoured for their rights of separate schools and separate language, which the English wished to deny them, and serious trouble threatened. The cries of the malcontents were echoed, with a few notable exceptions, by the million and a half of French in Quebec. It was clearly the duty of the Ottawa Government to take conciliatory steps; but the crisis had arisen at an unlucky moment. Since the death of the leaders, Sir John Macdonald and Sir John Thompson, the Conservative party in Canada was tottering. The Premier, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, held office under infinite difficulties, and this question of the Manitoba Schools threatened to convulse the entire country.

Such was the situation when Sir Donald Smith had a friendly interview with the Viceroy, the Earl of Aberdeen, and expressed his willingness to act as mediator amongst the people of the disturbed province. Lord Aberdeen recognised the value of the offer, but could do nothing without the assent of his constitutional advisers. While they hesitated, in February Sir Donald Smith travelled into the West.

A full quarter of a century before Sir Donald Smith, as a Commissioner from Canada to Red River, had found himself discussing at a public meeting a Bill of Rights. In that instrument was an article guaranteeing to the Roman Catholic and French-speaking people all the rights and privileges of race and religion they had theretofore enjoyed under the rule of the great fur company. This article they submitted to him, and he declared that it would be sanctioned by the Government of Canada. But at that time, it must be remembered, there were only some 11,000 or 12,000 people in the whole of Manitoba, of whom but little more than half, or 6,000, were French-speaking Roman Catholics. The other 5,000 odd were English-speaking; and Protestant Manitoba was confined to a comparatively small area sixty to sixty-five miles on either side of Winnipeg.

He went to Winnipeg on his own initiative and

conferred with the leading partisans on the situation. His appointment as Government Commissioner was finally made out, but not until 21st March, and by that time Sir Donald Smith had privately made himself master of the situation.

"Let us," he declared, "have every discussion in reason, but don't—don't let us have a religious cry in this new country."

The appeal did not fall upon deaf ears. Although the Conservative Government was defeated and the Liberals had come into power when the settlement was made, that settlement was made on the lines laid down by Sir Donald Smith. It was a dangerous step for a French-Canadian Premier to take—to fly in the face of Quebec opinion—but Sir Wilfrid Laurier did not shrink from it; separate schools were abolished, and the new order in the West begun.

McGill University has long been an institution for which Lord Strathcona has always evinced the deepest interest. He filled the post of Chancellor when its celebrated principal, Sir William Dawson, died, and felt the great, perhaps the irreparable loss it had sustained. To find a successor to Sir William now became his chief anxiety and was the chief object of a visit which he paid to England in the winter of 1895-6. It is not every man, not every University Chancellor, who has such a post within

his gift, or, if he had, could acquit himself wisely of a choice.

"What we require in the principal of McGill," he said, "is, first of all, administrative ability, and, secondly, a mind broad enough to embrace and understand all the interests existent in the University. It is not easy to find the right man to step into Sir William Dawson's shoes."

Nor was it easy. The story of that tour through Great Britain would alone fill a chapter. Sir Donald visited in turn Oxford and Cambridge, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Dundee in search of a head for one of the most admirably appointed and bountifully equipped seats of learning in the world. For a long time the secret of his choice was kept, and it cannot be denied that when it became known he had offered the post to Dr. William Peterson, Principal of Dundee, a man under forty, there was a slight feeling of disappointment. But Sir Donald Smith's judgment has not proved false, and to-day nowhere will it be disputed that in the present Principal of McGill University there is to be found a rare combination of scholastic zeal, mental equipment, and executive ability upon which Canada and her leading school may well be congratulated.

By the re-entry of Sir Charles Tupper into Canadian politics and his subsequent brief Premiership, the important post of High Commissioner for

Canada in London became vacant. Having vainly endeavoured to induce Sir Donald to accept a political office in the Dominion, he was finally urged to become Sir Charles Tupper's successor at the seat of empire.

"This was an office," he explained afterwards, "which I think those who know me will believe I did not covet. My name was mentioned in connection with a certain office, but no pressure could induce me to accept it. I have ever sought to free myself from mere partyism, while having a certain connection with public life.

"It was thought that perhaps my connection with public matters would enable me to be of some service to the country, particularly in relation to certain large questions in which both the Imperial and Canadian Governments are interested. I do not know yet to what extent I shall be able to serve the country in this regard, but I think I am a Canadian in spirit, and what I shall do will be in the interest of the country as a whole and not of any party."

The appointment was hailed with enthusiasm throughout Canada, and early in July he entered upon his new and arduous duties. History affords but few examples of a millionaire at Sir Donald Smith's time of life voluntarily devoting himself to labour which robbed him of all his leisure. He

was not only a statesman, able to cope with large questions of policy, but he was a business man, shrewd, acute, methodical, such as no incumbent of the office had been before.

"It is not exceeding," said a prominent Canadian journal, "the bonds of simple exactitude to say that Lord Strathcona has proved, merely from a commercial and manufacturing standpoint, the most valuable High Commissioner Canada has ever had. His reports are marvels of conciseness and plain, practical common sense. . . . None of his predecessors were able to bring to a task the trained judgment and ripened experience of Lord Strathcona, or to command that attention in commercial circles, or both circles, to which his financial eminence entitles him."

"Splendid as have been his benefactions," says a leading Canadian journal, "their demand on our gratitude has been eclipsed by the personal devotion by Lord Strathcona of his time, his talents, his influence, his social prestige, to whatever gave promise of furthering the development, the prosperity, and well-being of Canada and Canadians."

On taking the position Sir Donald had rendered it clear that he regarded it as strictly non-political, and the new Premier was of the same opinion. Consequently he joined with the Opposition in desiring Sir Donald to retain the High Commissioner-

ship. To speak of his eminent services in this office, of the vital and splendid force he has been for Canada in England and in Europe, is to speak of that which is happily visible daily to all.

It was in the early days of his High Commissionership that still further imperial honours fell to his lot. He was created a Knight Grand Cross of the Order to which he had been admitted in 1886, and being summoned to Windsor Castle for a private investiture, her late Majesty, with her own hands, bestowed upon her loyal subject the much-coveted insignia.

It was the writer's privilege to possess under interesting circumstances a copy—hot from the press—of the *London Gazette* of June 22nd—or rather the night of the 21st—proclaiming Sir Donald Smith a peer of the realm, and he well remembers the chorus of approval with which the announcement of this well-merited honour was greeted in a mixed assemblage of men and women hailing from every quarter of the British empire.

Few men, indeed, even in a long life, had accomplished as much practical work for the empire over seas as Donald Alexander Smith, but, as we shall see, his loyal work was far from completed.

Some doubt was expressed as by what title the new peer intended thereafter to be known. As he had recently purchased the historic estate of Glencoe, it seems to have been assumed that he would choose

Glencoe for his title, and a newspaper having made the announcement on its own authority, the High Commissioner enjoyed the distinction for some weeks of being addressed to and referred to as Lord Glencoe.

But one of his old friends, the Marquess of Lorne, was not to fall into the trap. Eulogising his character and achievements at the Dominion Day dinner that eventful year, the ex-Governor-General said, amidst laughter and cheers, "He has not confided in me by what title to address him. I shall, however, make no mistake if I congratulate him and call him Lord High Commissioner for Canada."

It is interesting to recall that this was actually the title which many years before Sir John Macdonald had suggested for this important post!

It was not until the latter part of August that the title he was henceforth to bear was announced. He was gazetted Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal of Glencoe, Argyllshire, and Montreal, Canada. At the same time the Heralds' College was required to produce a coat-of-arms. It was obvious that the occasion demanded an incursion into a fresh field for emblems. Weapons, coats of mail, castles, and collared wolves, typifying and celebrating feudal prowess and old-world deeds, were here inappropriate. The result finally composed forms one of

the most interesting and truly significant coats-of-arms in the entire roll of the British peerage:

Arms—gules on a fesse argent between a demi-lion rampant in chief or and a canoe of the host with four men paddling proper, in the bow a flag of the second, flowing to the dexter, inserted with the letters N. W. Sable in base. A hammer surmounted by a nail in saltire of the last. *Crest*—on a mount vert, a beaver eating into a maple tree proper. Then follows the motto, "Perseverance."

Someone has said of the recital of these arms that "it sounded like a fur-trading *voyageur's* song played upon a mediæval sackbut." The hammer and nail commemorate the driving of the last spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway. As to the motto—"Perseverance"—to no man and no career could it be more fitly applied.

Lord Aberdeen's term of office expiring at the close of the year 1897, there was much conjecture as to his successor. A demand now arose in Canada that the new peer should be appointed to the vacant viceroyalty.

"The Governor-Generalship," declared a leading organ, the *Montreal Star,* "is the imperial office most immediately under the eye of our people; and to seat a Canadian there would be as conspicuous a recognition of this colonial right to share in imperial

honours as could be given to the five millions dwelling in this part of the empire."

But Lord Strathcona very quickly imparted to his friends his opinion of the proposal. It is enough that he was wholly against it, and he would equally have been opposed to the appointment of any Canadian to this imperial post. The Governor-Generalship and its occupant form the chief link between Britain and her greatest colony.

This link should be, in the common acceptation of the term, Imperial; it should be forged at the seat of the Empire.

CHAPTER XI

PRACTICAL IMPERIALISM

FOR a year after his elevation to the peerage the new baron sat silent in the House of Lords. When, on the 28th June, 1898, he broke silence, it was to bring forward a measure dealing with a deep-seated colonial grievance: one of those anomalous provisions of English civil and ecclesiastical law, contemplating which even the intelligent Hottentot cannot withhold the tribute of a smile. The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill had been before the British Parliament for a generation without having passed into law. The interdiction of any alliance with a deceased wife's sister continued, amidst the derision of Europe, and the fruit of all such alliances were in the United Kingdom harshly declared illegal. But in the rest of the Queen's domains the interdiction had been abolished under laws signed by Her Majesty. Consequently, what was legal and legitimate in Canada, for example, was illegal and illegitimate in England.

When Lord Strathcona rose to move his Bill for the legalisation in the United Kingdom of

marriages contracted in the Colonies, he faced one of the most numerous and splendid audiences that have ever packed the Upper Chamber. Not only were the benches full of the nobility, including the heir to the throne and other members of the Royal Family, but an array of peeresses and distinguished commoners looked down upon him from the galleries. This moment was, beyond comparison, the most brilliant of his lifetime.

"My lords," he began in a clear, low voice, "I have very great diffidence in appearing to address you at this time. It is the first occasion on which I have had the privilege of addressing you as a member of this House. Notwithstanding, it is also with very great confidence that I come before you, my lords, for I know that you will have much consideration for one in the position I occupy."

After detailing the provisions and scope of his Bill, he continued :—

"Why should the children of such marriages when they come home bear a mark of disgrace? Why should they be legitimate in one part of the empire and illegitimate in another, when the marriage is perfectly legal, under laws passed by local Parliaments and assented to by the Queen? . . . Is this," he continued, lowering his voice impressively, "is this a creditable state of things in

our present civilisation? For some years past the different parts of the empire have been drawn close together. The troops of the Colonies have fought shoulder to shoulder with those of the Motherland. Her Majesty's subjects in the Colonies have shared in the joys and in the sorrows of their Motherland. Glad people from every part of the world where the British flag is paramount came last year to London to do honour to their beloved Sovereign. . . . In fact, we are all doing our best to develop the empire of which we are so proud and to strengthen the ties which bind us together, and the removal of this grievance cannot fail to further consolidate the union. Let me therefore appeal to your lordships to express your approval of this measure, which seeks to remove what is regarded as a grave anomaly in the Colonies, to remove a restriction which operates against one of their most sacred rights, and to free the children of your colonial brethren who contract perfectly legal marriages from the stigma which now attaches to them when they come to their Motherland. I may also be permitted to address a word to the most reverend and the right reverend lords in this House. It is that the clergy both of the Established Church, of the other Protestant denominations, and of the Catholic Church in Canada, and I believe also in the other Colonies,

have accepted this Bill, and unquestionably many of them approve of it.

"I would now, my lords, in closing, desire to say that I stand here—it is by the gracious will of the Sovereign that I have the privilege—as a Colonist, as one of those coming from the Colonies. Every man in the Colonies looks upon himself as being as much of an Englishman as if he were born within the bounds of the United Kingdom. He glories in the name of Englishman, and he has all the aspirations that you and all those who are loyal to the empire have. This measure affects—and affects very gravely—many in the Colonies, from the ministers of the Crown to the artisan, and many of them the most worthy and the most loyal. Nay, I would withdraw this last expression, 'the most loyal.' Throughout the Dominion of Canada—indeed, my lords, throughout all the Colonies—there is now but one standard, but one measure of loyalty. (Applause.) Such being the case, and feeling as they do that they are, equally with those in this country, members of the great empire to which we all belong, I am confident that you, my lords, will on this occasion send those who are in the position I have referred to a message of goodwill, that you are desirous of doing full justice to them."

The Lord Chancellor (Lord Halsbury) opposed the Bill, mainly because, he urged, it would alter

the succession to real property in this country. The Colonies appeared to want to dictate to us the law regarding the succession to real property; this they had no right to do. Lord James of Hereford's speech effectively crushed this foolish argument, and a division was taken. The Prince of Wales (King Edward VII.), the Duke of Devonshire, and others voted for Lord Strathcona's Bill, which was carried by the most unexpected majority of 129 to 46. In the minority appeared the names of Lords Salisbury, Cross, Balfour of Burleigh, and ten bishops.

But the Government refused to take up the Bill in the Lower House. There were sworn enemies to reform who could not perceive the anomaly of the existing situation. Two years later, therefore, in June, 1900, Lord Strathcona again brought forward his measure.

On the occasion of this second speech, delivered on 28th May, 1900, there was the same brilliant attendance. Lord Strathcona's effort was even more weighty and eloquent.

"This measure," said he, "has not been sprung upon Parliament suddenly. It is in no sense a movement of impulse. For twenty-four years the Colonies have been pressing the matter upon the attention of the imperial authorities. It affects, my lords, the most important and sacred of all contracts,

and affects communities not less attached to the Christian religion than those of the Mother Country. . . . The present time seems to me a singularly appropriate one for such action on the part of your lordships as I have ventured to recommend. For the last few years there has been a great awakening of imperial sentiment. The different parts of the empire have vied with one another in demonstrating their loyalty to the Crown and to the empire. They have shown not only the desire, but the determination to share both in its joys and in its troubles, and we have at the present time in South Africa an object-lesson to the world of the practical unity of the different parts of the British Empire, which has awakened an enthusiasm both in the Motherland and in every part of the world where the British flag flies never witnessed before. . . . Your favourable decision would be regarded in some parts of the empire as a message of goodwill to our fellow-subjects, who are so closely connected with us by common ancestry, by common patriotism, by common love for the empire to which we are all proud to belong, and by common loyalty and veneration for our gracious Sovereign."

The Archbishop of York this time joined his eloquence to that of the Lord Chancellor, but in vain. The majority for the Bill was 116 to 31 votes, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and the

LORD STRATHCONA COLONEL COMMANDANT

STRATHCONA HORSE

Duke of Connaught voting with the majority. This imposing majority proved, however, unavailing; Lord Salisbury had sufficient influence to prevent its being brought forward in the House of Commons. The Bill was treated with silent neglect by the leaders of that body.

In the meantime, as intimated in the foregoing, the great and bloody struggle for supremacy between Briton and Boer had broken out in South Africa.

From the commencement of the strife Lord Strathcona took the deepest, closest interest in the progress of events at the theatre of war. He was one of the very first to perceive—alas! had it but been perceived earlier—that our chief need in those wild, barren stretches was a rugged, ardent, mobile force—a force such as the enemy themselves represented—under a fearless leader, but each man an effective unit, a good shot, and a tireless horseman. The repeated reverses, following on the mistaken tactics of those dark days early in 1900, suggested to Lord Strathcona that the experiment of such a body of rough riders as the Canadian Mounted Police ought to be tried. The thought crystallised for a few days, and then early in January came the offer of such a mounted force from himself—as a Canadian—to the Queen and empire. It would be raised by himself, equipped by himself, and transported to South Africa at his own cost—nearly six hundred mounted men

and horses. It would not cost the War Office a penny: its expense to him would be over a million dollars. The magnificence of this offer almost startled the country; needless to say, it was accepted.

When, on the departure of a portion of the contingent *en route* from Canada to South Africa, Lord Strathcona addressed them a few words, the scene was an inspiring one. Briefly he complimented them on their fitness for the work which lay before them.

"I am sure," he said simply, "you will do as the others have done. You can do no more, you will do no less. God speed you, and a safe return."

"Every man of us," said one of these hardy troopers, who afterwards gave a good account of himself in a dozen fights, "felt moved almost to tears. We knew that the old man believed in us, and we silently swore to reward that trust. Well," he added, "I think most of us did—as—*the others have done*. We could do no more."

The Strathconas ultimately became attached to Lord Dundonald's brigade. They had their first conflict on that day of glorious associations—Dominion Day—and made a number of prisoners, with the loss of only one man in action. After that fighting was common enough, and so were fatalities. On one occasion the leader, Colonel Steele, had his horse shot under him, and "actually admitted, with a smile, that he had been in a tight corner." But

the exploits of Strathcona's Horse properly belong to the history of the great Boer War. Much as this corps has been praised, it cannot be said that Colonel Steele and his men were given that chance to do their utmost to defeat and destroy the enemy, which the War Office in its subsequent stage of enlightenment would have granted. Amongst the enemy, it may be mentioned, the corps was known and dreaded widely as the "English Boers."

A popular modern writer has said of his old-world hero:* "His character is one of those which combine activity of thought with great faculty of reverence and of submission. . . . These natures are enthusiastic, though generally not supposed to be so and though little sign of it appears in their outward conduct; for the objects of their enthusiasm being generally different from those which attract most men, they are conscious that they have little sympathy to expect in their pursuit of them, and this gives their enthusiasm a reserved and cautious demeanour. . . . This feeling, more than anything else, gives to persons of this nature a demeanour quite different from that of the ordinary religious or political enthusiast, a demeanour seemingly cold and indifferent, though courteous, and to some extent sympathetic."

I believe these words might, without much altera-

* "John Inglesant."

tion, be applied to Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal.

His eightieth birthday found Lord Strathcona as hale and hearty, as clear in intellect, and as capable of hard work as most men of half these years.

"Providence," said he on one occasion, "has favoured me with a good constitution. Then I have had plenty of work to do all my life, and there is no doubt that that is the best thing for keeping a man well and strong; for in the very effort to do that work thoroughly well, he must cut off any habits and practices that tend to weaken him and render him unfit for the best service."

As to Lord Strathcona's hospitality, it has long been a byword amongst all who know him. In Montreal, in London, at Knebworth, at Glencoe, or at Winnipeg, there was the same lavish consideration for the comfort as well as the æsthetic perceptions of his guests. He entertained Lord Dufferin in the early "seventies," and each succeeding Viceroy enjoyed his princely hospitality. Among the guests at the Montreal mansion have been numbered the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne, the Earl and Countess of Derby, the Earl and Countess of Aberdeen, the Earl and Countess of Minto, and last, but not least, their Royal Highnesses the present Prince and

Princess of Wales, who remained under his lordship's roof during the whole of their recent stay in Montreal. In each of these instances the dinner-party was followed by a reception, to which over a thousand persons were invited.

His love for art is amply attested by a valuable private collection of pictures. The highest price ever paid for a modern picture at auction (45,000 dollars) was given by him for Jules Breton's "The First Communion." He has also in his collection numerous examples of Raphael, Titian, Turner, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, Millais, Constable, and other famous masters.

Lord Strathcona has received many honours in the last twenty years, but there are few that he prizes more highly than his LL.D. degree, granted him by Cambridge University in 1887. Five years after this was followed by a similar doctoral conferment on the part of Yale University.

In 1900 he was chosen to succeed the Earl of Aberdeen as Lord Rector of Aberdeen University.* Towards the close of his address he gave some views on the empire's future which deserve to be well conned by every subject. "We have," said he, "glanced at some of the milestones along the road which has led to the cross-roads we are now facing,

* December, 1900.

and the question before us is, Which of them must be taken? Shall it be the one which points to the maintenance of the existing order of things, or the other which will lead to closer unity for imperial purposes, for commercial purposes, and for defence? There seems to be a general feeling in favour of the latter, which will assure the different parts of the empire full liberty of self-government, while giving them a voice in imperial policy, the desire for which is becoming stronger every year. There are some who think that the solution of the problem is to be found in the representation of Canada and the Colonies in the Imperial Parliament. I am not one of those who share that view, at any rate, until a truly Imperial Parliament to deal with imperial affairs can be established.

"In times to come it is within the bounds of possibility that there may be local parliaments to deal with local affairs in England, Scotland, and Ireland; and we may also then have a Parliament with representatives from the different parts of the empire which will be imperial in name and in its work. We are approaching a period when all parts of the empire will seek to have a voice in the foreign policy and in other subjects affecting the well-being of the community in general. That some way must be found of meeting the aspirations of the Colonies does not admit of doubt. I have made some reference to the

question of an Imperial Parliament. That may be the ultimate solution or it may not. But in the meantime the constitution of an Imperial Council in conjunction with the Colonial Office, consisting of representatives of the Imperial Government and of Canada and the Colonies, has been mentioned as a preliminary step, even if the Council were only consultative at the commencement."

In the above will be found compressed all the wisdom of the newer and saner school of Imperialists. It is the sober judgment of a successful Imperialist of over sixty years' standing, and what he has prophesied it is our fervent hope may be brought to pass.

"It is," he said again, in one of his English speeches, "very much the fashion to complain that the Colonies do not contribute to the expenses of the army and navy, although the services exist for imperial purposes. They do not perhaps, except in the case of Australasia, make any direct contribution, but they have been piling up debts, for which they alone are responsible, for works and developments of imperial as well as local utility. Their railways, telegraphs, and harbours, subsidies for steam and cable communication, expenses for local defences and militia establishments, all come under this heading. In Canada the construction of the railways entails an annual charge upon the country

of one million sterling. These facts should be borne in mind in discussing the matter."

Somebody once asked Lord Strathcona for some words of advice on behalf of young men, and in the reply he gave he revealed his own lifelong guiding principles.

"Be content," said he, "with your lot, but always be fitting yourself for something better and something higher. Do not despise what you are. Be satisfied for the time, not grumbling and finding fault. If you want to get higher, to a better position, only cheerful perseverance will bring you there: grumbling will not help you an inch. Your future really depends almost entirely on yourself, and is what you like to make it; I would like to impress this fact upon you. Do the work yourself; don't wait for friends to use their influence on your behalf; don't depend on the help of others. Of course, opportunity is a great thing, and it comes to some men more frequently than to others. But there are very few it does not visit at one time or another, and if you are not ready for it and have not prepared to welcome it, that is your fault, and you are the loser. Apart from that which we call genius, I believe that one man is able to do as well as any other, provided the opportunity presents itself and he is blessed with good health.

Much of what I would advise you young men to do is contained in the old counsel, 'Trust in Providence, and keep your powder dry.'"

And with no more fitting words than these—pregnant with practical wisdom, and revealing so much of his own modest character—can we close this narrative of the remarkable career of one well meriting the title of Canada's "Grand Old Man."

APPENDIX A

HON. DONALD A. SMITH'S OWN NARRATIVE OF EVENTS DURING THE RED RIVER REBELLION, 1869–70

REPORT AS CANADIAN COMMISSIONER TO RED RIVER

ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

LEAVING Ottawa on the 13th December last, I reached St. Cloud, the terminus of railway communication, on the 17th, continuing on the same day by stage, and arriving at Abercrombie on the evening of the 19th. Here we had to abandon wheeled carriages, and procuring a sleigh, after a couple of hours' rest, we resumed the journey, and on the afternoon of the 21st met Hon. Mr. Macdougall and party about thirty miles beyond Georgetown. From him I learned how serious the aspect of affairs had latterly become at Red River, and pushing on, we got to Pembina about 11 p.m. of the 24th and to Fort Garry on the 27th.

The gate of the fort we found open, but guarded by several armed men, who on my desiring to be shown to Governor Mactavish's house, requested me to wait till they could communicate with their chief. In a short

time Mr. Louis Riel appeared. I announced my name. He said he had heard of my arrival at Pembina, and was about to send off a party to bring me in. I then accompanied him to a room occupied by ten or a dozen men, whom he introduced to me as members of the "provisional Government." He requested to know the purport of my visit, to which I replied in substance that I was connected with the Hudson's Bay Company, but also held a commission from the Canadian Government to the people of Red River, and would be prepared to show my credentials as soon as they (the people) were willing to receive me. I was then asked to take oath not to attempt to leave the fort that night, nor to upset their Government, legally established. This request I peremptorily refused to comply with, but said that, being very tired, I had no desire to go outside the gate that night, and promised to take no immediate steps forcibly to upset the so-called "provisional Government," legal or illegal as it might be, without first announcing my intention to do so, Mr. Riel taking exception to the word "illegal," while I insisted on retaining it. Mr. O'Donoghue, to get over the difficulty, remarked, "That is as he" (meaning myself) "understands it," to which I replied, "Precisely so." The above explanation I am the more particular in giving as it has been reported that I at once acknowledged the "provisional Government" to be legal. Neither then nor afterwards did I do so.

I took up my quarters in one of the houses occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company's officers, and from that date till towards the end of February was virtually a

prisoner within the fort, although with permission to go outside the walls for exercise accompanied by two armed guards, a privilege of which I never availed myself.

All my official papers had been left in charge of Mr. Provencher at Pembina, as I had been warned that, if found in my possession, they would unquestionably be seized, as were those brought into the settlement shortly after by the Rev. Mr. Thibault and Colonel de Salaberry.

The state of matters at this time in and around Fort Garry was most unsatisfactory and truly humiliating. Upwards of sixty British subjects were held in close confinement as "political prisoners"; security for persons or property there was none; the fort, with its large supplies of ammunition, provisions, and stores of all kinds, was in the possession of a few hundred French half-breeds, whose leaders had declared their determination to use every effort for the purpose of annexing the territory to the United States, and the Governor and Council of Assiniboia were powerless to enforce the law.

On the 6th of January I saw Mr. Riel, and soon came to the conclusion that no good could arise from entering into any negotiations with his "Council," even were we to admit their authority, which I was not prepared to do. We learnt that on the 13th the Grand Vicar Thibault and Colonel de Salaberry appeared before the "President and Council of the People," when some explanations and compliments were exchanged, after which the very rev.

gentleman and his associate were politely bowed out and lost sight of.

Meantime, we had frequent visits in the fort from some of the most influential and most reliable men in the settlement, who gladly made known to the people generally the liberal intentions of the Canadian Government, and in consequence one after another of Riel's councillors seceded from him, and being joined by their friends and many of their compatriots and co-religionists, who had throughout held aloof from the insurgents, they determined no longer to submit to his dictation. This change evidently had a marked effect upon Riel, causing him to alter his tactics and to profess a desire for an accommodation with Canada. Accordingly, on the 14th of January, he called on me, informed me that he had seen Messrs. Thibault and de Salaberry, whose instructions did not authorise them to give assurances that the people would be secured in possession of their rights on entering into the Confederation, their errand being merely "to calm the French half-breeds." He then asked to see my commission, and on my explaining that owing entirely to the action taken by himself it was not in my possession, in an excited yet faltering manner he said, "Yes, I know, 'tis a great pity; but how soon could you have it?" "Probably in five or six days," I replied. "That is too long, far too long," he responded, and then asked where the documents were deposited, requesting at the same time a written order for their delivery to his messenger. To this I would not accede, but on his assuring me that they would be delivered into my hands, and that I

should be afforded an opportunity of communicating their contents to the people, I consented to send a friend for them. It was so decided, and immediately after the messenger had received his instructions from me I was placed under strict arrest, a captain's guard being assigned me, whose instructions were not to lose sight of me, day or night, and prevent me from communicating either verbally or in writing with any individual. I protested, saying, "Am I to consider myself a prisoner?" He replied, "Certainly not; I have the utmost confidence in your honour, but circumstances demand this."

It was now about ten o'clock, and my messenger having been marched out, I retired to bed, but only to be awakened 'twixt two or three o'clock in the morning of the 15th by Mr. Riel, who, with a guard, stood by the bedside and again demanded a written order for the delivery of my official papers, which I again peremptorily refused to give.

The well-affected French party became aware of what had happened, and not believing in Riel's good faith, determined to prevent the papers from falling into his hands. They got together some sixty or eighty men, who met my friend on his way back, and were escorting him, when on the 18th, about ten miles from the fort, they were accosted by Riel and some of his party and by the Rev. Mr. Richot. An altercation took place. Riel attempted to use his pistol, saying "he would not be taken alive in his own country," on which a revolver was levelled at his head, and Mr. Richot having interposed, he was unceremoniously told to stand aside and

"not to interfere any further with matters unconnected with his spiritual duties." It may be well to note that all those who took part in this affair were Catholics and, with one or two exceptions, French half-breeds. Nothing more serious happened at this time, and the party proceeded together to Fort Garry, where they arrived in the forenoon. A few minutes before they entered the house, the Very Rev. Mr. Thibault, Père Lestanc, and Colonel de Salaberry called upon me, and with the exception of my guard, they were the first individuals with whom I was permitted to converse since the 14th. They appeared to be much concerned, and said it was currently reported I had been endeavouring to incite the different parties to hostile collisions. I repudiated any such charge, explaining that I had acted only in the cause of peace and order, and with the desire of making the people, both French and English, fully acquainted with the liberal views of the Canadian Government, so that a peaceful transfer of the territory might be effected, adding that I was pleased to think there was every likelihood this would speedily be accomplished. In the meantime, the party in possession of my papers entered the adjoining room, in which Père Lestanc joined them, while Messrs. Thibault and de Salaberry went outside. Immediately after they retired, Mr. Riel came to me, saying, "Your commission is here, but in the hands of men who had no right to have it." I expressed satisfaction that it had been brought in, and said, being now in possession of it, I must be relieved from all restraint, and be permitted freely to communicate with the people. He at once removed the guard, and we

went up to the party who had just arrived. Messrs. Riel and O'Donoghue with a few of their friends were present, and vehemently protested against the action now being taken, while the ex-councillors accused them of treason to the Imperial Crown, and of using every effort to bring about the annexation of the country to the United States. Riel replied that was only supposing the people desired it, but that he was willing the question should be submitted to them. Père Lestanc spoke warmly in favour of the "President," who, he said, had acted so as to merit the gratitude of his countrymen, and begged them still to place confidence in him. This evidently had no effect, and ultimately, after a good deal of recrimination, it was arranged that a meeting of the inhabitants from all parts of the settlement should be called for the morrow, the 19th, at which the papers bearing on the subject should be read, a guard of forty men remaining in the house to ensure the safe-keeping of the documents.

Riel's men were now falling away from him, while the loyal party expressed their determination no longer to be guided in the matter either by him or by Père Lestanc and his associates. They were full of hope and confident that the following day would bring with it complete success to the cause of Canada.

Late that night Père Lestanc paid them another visit, which was prolonged for several hours beyond midnight, and next morning it was found that a majority of those who had seceded from Riel were again on friendly terms with him. The hour for the meeting having arrived, upwards of a thousand people attended, and deeming it

of great importance that the explanation to be made on behalf of the Canadian Government should be faithfully rendered to the French-speaking portion of the settlers, whose leaders had studiously withheld from them all knowledge of the true state of matters in connection with the proposed transfer of the country, I requested Colonel de Salaberry to act as interpreter; but the Colonel, diffident of his own ability as a translator, proposed Mr. Riel as an interpreter, and the latter was appointed accordingly.

At this meeting, and that held the following day, the reading of the commission, the Queen's letter, and every other document was contested with much obstinacy, but ultimately carried; and threats were used to myself in the presence and hearing of the chairman, of the secretary, Judge Black, and others, more especially by Mr. Riel and Rev. Mr. Lestanc. At the commencement of the meeting I requested the chairman and those near him to begin by insisting that all arms should be laid down, and that the flag then flying (fleur-de-lis and shamrock) should be replaced by the British ensign. This they thought would come better at an after-stage; but the opportunity of doing so, now lost, never recurred.

As is generally known, the result of the meeting was the appointment of forty delegates, twenty from either side, to meet on the 25th January, "with the object of considering the subject of Mr. Smith's commission and to decide what would be best for the welfare of the country," the English as a body and a large number of French declaring their entire satisfaction with the

explanations given and their earnest desire for union with Canada.

On the 22nd Riel had several conferences with the well-affected French within the fort; he was melted even to tears, told them how earnestly he desired an arrangement with Canada, and assured them that he would lay down his authority immediately on the meeting of the Convention. They believed him sincere, and although I considered that their guard in the fort should not be decreased, they held that ten men would be amply sufficient to leave while they went to secure their elections. The consequence was that they had hardly gone when repressive measures were resorted to, and the Hudson's Bay Company's stores, which had hitherto been only partially in their hands, were now taken complete possession of by Riel.

Efforts were made to have the prisoners released, but without effect.

The delegates met on the 25th and continued in session till the 10th February. On the 26th I handed to their chairman, Judge Black, the documents read at the meetings of the 19th and 20th January, and on the 27th attended the Convention by appointment. I was received with much cordiality by all the delegates, explained to them the views of the Canadian Government, and gave assurances that on entering the confederation they would be secured in the possession of all rights, privileges, and immunities enjoyed by British subjects in other parts of the Dominion; but on being requested by Mr. Riel to give an opinion regarding a certain "List of Rights" prepared by his party in December last, I declined to do so, thinking

it better that the present Convention should place in my hands a paper stating their wishes, to which I should "be happy to give such assurances as I believed would be in accordance with the views of the Canadian Government." The Convention then set about the task of preparing a "List of Rights" embodying the conditions on which they would be willing to enter the Confederation. While the discussion regarding this list was going on, Mr. Riel called on me and asked if the Canadian Government would consent to receive them as a province. My reply was that I could not speak with any degree of certainty on the subject, as it had not been referred to when I was at Ottawa, the intention then being that the North-West should in the first instance be incorporated under the Dominion as a territory; but I added that no doubt it would become a province within two or three years. On this Mr. Riel, with much emphasis, exclaimed, "Then the Hudson's Bay Company is not safe yet!" To which I answered, "Mr. Riel, that cannot influence me in the slightest degree, and I am quite prepared to act as may be required of me in my capacity as Canadian Commissioner." This was on the evening of the 3rd of February. On the following day the proposition to enter as a province was negatived by the Convention, and on the 5th another motion, directed against the Hudson's Bay Company, also failed, the language used by Mr. Riel on the latter occasion having been violent in the extreme. The same evening Riel proceeded to Governor Mactavish, who had been dangerously ill for many weeks back, and heaping reproaches and insult upon him, declared that he would

have him shot before midnight. Riel then sought out Dr. Cowan, the officer in immediate charge of Red River District, upbraided him for his persistent opposition to "the people," the insurgents, and declaring that his name would go down with infamy to posterity for the part he had taken, demanded that he would immediately swear allegiance to the "provisional Government" or prepare for death within three hours, giving him a quarter of an hour for consideration. The Doctor immediately replied that he knew no legal authority in the country but that of Great Britain to which his allegiance was due, and that he would not take the oath required of him. He was then seized and put in confinement along with the prisoners taken in December last. I was also put under strict charge, but not removed from the house. Notwithstanding this and the painful doubt created in the minds of the English members of the Convention as to the course they should pursue, after these arrests the delegates again met on the 7th. On the 5th they had placed in my hands the "List of Rights" they had drawn up, which was done at eleven o'clock on the 7th, with an intimation that the Convention would be glad to meet me at one o'clock p.m., the intervening two hours being allowed me to frame my answers. In drawing up these I was allowed no reference to any document, either written or printed, except the "List of Rights," and a guard stood over me to see that I should write nothing else than that to be presented to the Convention. I had just finished writing when Mr. Riel and his Adjutant-General, Lepine, who was also a member of the Conven-

tion, came in, and Riel, looking at the latter in a significant manner, said, "The answers to the 'List of Rights' must be simply 'yes' or 'no.'" On this I remarked that I thought otherwise, and would act as circumstances might appear to me to require. I then retired, and on returning to the room a few minutes later, found there Mr. Riel, the Rev. Mr. Thibault, and Colonel de Salaberry. We proceeded together to the Convention, and in course of conversation Colonel de Salaberry said he would gladly have come to see me before, but could not, as he had been a prisoner throughout.

The proceedings of the Convention, as reported in the *New Nation* newspaper of the 11th and 18th of February, copies of which I have had the honour of addressing to you, are sufficiently exact, and render it unnecessary for me here to enter into details. Suffice it to say that a large majority of the delegates expressed entire satisfaction with the answers to their "List of Rights," and professed confidence in the Canadian Government, to which I invited them to send delegates, with the view of effecting a speedy transfer of the territory to the Dominion, an invitation received with acclamation and unanimously accepted, as will appear by resolution hereto annexed, along with the "List of Rights" and my answer to the same. The delegates named were John Black, Esq., Recorder, the Rev. Mr. Richot, and Mr. Alfred H. Scott, a good deal of opposition having been offered to the election of the last-named of the three.

The proceedings of this Convention came to a close on the 10th of February by the nomination of the "pro-

visional Government," in the formation of which several delegates declined to take any part. Governor Mactavish, Dr. Cowan, and two or three other persons were then released, and the Hudson's Bay Company's officers again allowed to come and go at pleasure; but I was still confined to the fort, Riel, as he expressly stated to Judge Black, being apprehensive of my influence with the people in the approaching election. Riel promised that all the prisoners should soon be released. On the 11th and 12th six or eight of them were set at liberty, and Dr. Cowan was informed in my presence that as they were all to be discharged without delay, the rooms they had occupied would be placed at his disposal in a day or two, Riel remarking at the same time that he would have them thoroughly cleaned out.

Rumours now began to circulate of a rising at the Portage, and on the nights of the 14th and 15th of February some eighty or one hundred men from that district passed down close to Fort Garry and proceeded to Kildonan, where they were joined by from 300 to 350 men, principally English half-breeds from the lower parts of the settlement. Had these men, properly armed and organised, been prepared to support the well-affected French party, when the latter took action about the middle of January or even in the beginning of February, during the sitting of the Convention, order might have been restored, and the transfer to Canada provided for without the necessity of firing a single shot; but now the rising was not only rash, but purposeless, as, without its intervention, the prisoners would unquestionably have

been released. The party was entirely unorganised, indifferently armed, unprovided with food, even for one meal, and wholly incapable of coping with the French, now reunited, who to the number of at least 700 were prepared to offer the most determined resistance, which, as they were in possession of a number of guns (six- and three-pounders), ample stores of ammunition, provisions, and every other requisite, they could have done most effectually. My sympathies were, in a great measure, with the Portage men, whom I believe to have been actuated by the best of motives; but under the circumstances it was not difficult to foresee that the issue could not be otherwise than disastrous to their cause. The attempt was therefore to be deplored, as it resulted in placing the whole settlement at the feet of Riel. The great majority of settlers, English and Scotch, discountenanced the movement, and bitterly complained of those who had set it on foot. Forty-seven of the party were captured on their way home while passing within a few hundred yards of the fort. The explanation I have heard given for their otherwise inexplicable conduct in having taking this route, instead of making a détour, which should have ensured safety, being a supposed promise by Riel that they would be permitted to pass unmolested. Their messenger, a young man named McLean, on being questioned by Archdeacon McLean and myself in presence of the Rev. Mr. Gardner and one or two other gentlemen, admitted that Riel, on being asked if the party would be permitted to pass, was silent, and only on being informed that they intended

next day to use the route just outside the town remarked, "Ah, that is good!" And for his purpose it, no doubt, was so. Captain Boulton led the party, and he and his friends at the Portage assured me that he exerted himself to the utmost to keep them from rising, and only joined them at the last moment when he saw they were determined to go forward. He was captured on the 17th, tried by court-martial, and condemned to be shot at noon on the following day; but at the intercession of the Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land, Archdeacon McLean, and, in short, every influential man among the English, and, I have been told, also at the earnest entreaty of the Catholic clergy, the execution was delayed till midnight of Saturday the 19th. Further than this, Riel declared he could not, would not yield, except, indeed, Dr. Schultz should be captured in the meantime, in which case he would be shot instead of Boulton. Archdeacon McLean had been in close attendance on Captain Boulton for twenty-four hours, had administered to him the Sacrament, received his last commands, and had promised to be present with him at the last moment; and when I met the Archdeacon on my way to see Riel, about eight o'clock on the evening of the 19th, he was deeply affected, and had given up all hope. I found with Riel Mr. H. N. Robinson, of the *New Nation* newspaper, and shortly afterwards Mr. James Ross, Chief Justice, entered, followed in a few minutes by Mr. Bannatyne, Postmaster, who had been ordered to bring the key of the mail-bag, which Riel opened, and examining the letters, perused and retained one or more. Mr. Ross pleaded

for Boulton, but was repulsed in the most contemptuous manner. I had already been speaking to Riel on the subject when interrupted by Mr. Ross's entrance, and now resumed the conversation. Riel was obdurate, and said that the English settlers and Canadians, but more especially the latter, had laughed at and despised the French half-breeds, believing that they would not dare to take the life of anyone, and that under these circumstances it would be impossible to have peace and establish order in the country. An example must therefore be made, and he had firmly resolved that Boulton's execution should be carried out, bitterly as he deplored the necessity for doing so. I reasoned with him long and earnestly, until at length, about ten o'clock, he yielded, and addressing me, apparently with much feeling, said, "Hitherto I have been deaf to all entreaties, and in now granting you this man's life," or words to that effect, "may I ask you a favour?" "Anything," I replied, "that in honour I can do." He continued: "Canada has disunited us; will you use your influence to unite us? You can do so, and without this it must be war—bloody civil war!" I answered that, as I had on first coming to the country, I would now repeat, "I would give my whole heart to effect a peaceable union of the country with Canada."

"We want only our just rights as British subjects," he continued, "and we want the English to join us simply to obtain these." "Then," I remarked, "I shall at once see them and induce them to go on with the election of delegates for that purpose"; and he replied, "If you can

do this war will be avoided. Not only the lives but the liberty of all the prisoners will be secured, for on your success depend the lives of all the Canadians in the country." He immediately proceeded to the prison and intimated to Archdeacon McLean that he had been induced by me to spare Captain Boulton's life, and had further promised to me that immediately on the meeting of the Council shortly to be elected the whole of the prisoners should be released, requesting the Archdeacon at the same time to explain these circumstances to Captain Boulton and the other prisoners. The moment was a fearful one for the settlement. Every man's life was in the hands of Riel, and fully appreciating the significance of this, the Bishop of Rupert's Land and the Protestant clergy generally now earnestly counselled the people to elect their delegates without loss of time, as by this means they might to some extent control the course of events, while otherwise they were utterly powerless. I entirely concurred in this view of the case, and Archdeacon McLean having kindly offered to accompany me, we visited the different parts of the settlement, and found that in several parishes the people and those most loyal to the British Crown and most desirous for union with Canada had already chosen their councillors. I explained to all that the Council was to be provisional, in the strictest sense of the word, intended expressly for effecting the transference of the country to Canada, and for ensuring the safety of life and property in the meantime. In some instances I found they had drawn up petitions to Mr. Riel, as "President," expressing submission, etc.

These I requested them to destroy, advising that nothing more should be done than under the circumstances was absolutely necessary, namely, that having made their election, they should simply intimate the fact in formal terms to Mr. Bunn, who had been named Secretary of the Council, and not to Mr. Riel. The elections in the English parishes having taken place on the 26th February, I again saw Riel, who reassured me that all the prisoners would be released within a day or two after the first meeting of the Council. On the 28th he again sent for me, and in the presence of Mr. Fraser, delegate from the Scotch parish, Kildonan, repeated his promise that the lives of the prisoners were secured, and that their release would shortly follow.

I had no further communication with Riel until Monday, the 4th March, when about ten o'clock in the morning Père Lestanc called on me. He informed me of Bishop Taché's expected arrival—not later certainly than the 8th, and probably some days earlier—adding that his lordship had telegraphed to request that if about to leave for Canada I should defer my departure till he could communicate personally with me. He then said that the "conduct of the prisoners was very unsatisfactory, that they were very unruly, insolent to the 'soldiers,' and their behaviour altogether so very bad that he was afraid the guards might be forced to retaliate in self-defence." I expressed much surprise at the information he gave, as the prisoners, without exception, had promised to Archdeacon McLean and myself that, seeing their helpless condition, they would endeavour to act so as to avoid

giving offence to their guards, and we encouraged them to look forward to be speedily released in fulfilment of the promise made by Mr. Riel. One man, Parker, was mentioned as having made himself particularly obnoxious by his violent conduct; but not one word was said on this occasion regarding Scott, or the slightest intimation given that he or any other person had been condemned to be shot. About eleven o'clock Père Lestanc left me and went upstairs to communicate to Governor Mactavish, as he said, "the good news that Bishop Taché was expected so soon." The Rev. Mr. Young, Methodist clergyman, had just entered the house, and meeting the Père in the hall, conversed with him a few minutes. Mr. Young then came up to me, and from him I had the first intimation that it was intended to shoot Thomas Scott, and that the sentence was to be carried into effect at twelve o'clock noon that day. We agreed in believing that the thing was too monstrous to be possible, and Mr. Young mentioned that poor Scott himself was equally incredulous on the subject, thinking they merely intended to frighten him. However, even to keep him in suspense was of itself a horrible cruelty, and it was arranged that as Mr. Young had been sent for to attend the man, he should see Riel, ascertain exactly how the matter stood, and if really serious to let me know at once. Mr. Young accordingly called on Riel, was informed that Scott had been condemned, that the sentence was irrevocable and would not be delayed one minute beyond noon. Mr. Young begged for delay, saying "the man is not prepared to die"; but all without avail. He was paralysed with horror, returned

to the prisoner, and immediately sent a messenger to inform me of the result of his visit. I determined to find out Riel immediately, but recollecting that Père Lestanc was still upstairs with Mr. Mactavish, went to him, related what I had heard, and asked him if he knew anything about the matter. His answer I cannot give in precise words, but it was to the effect that they had seen Mr. Riel on the other side (St. Boniface) and had all spoken to him about it, by which I understood that they had interceded for Scott. Governor Mactavish was greatly shocked on being informed of Riel's purpose, and joined in reprobating it. Père Lestanc consented to accompany me, and we called on Riel. When we entered he asked me, "What news from Canada?" The mail had arrived the preceding day, and I replied, "Only the intelligence that Bishop Taché will be here very soon." I then mentioned what I had heard regarding Scott, and before Riel answered Père Lestanc interposed in French words, meaning, "Is there no way of escape?" Riel replied to him, "My Rev. Père, you know exactly how the matter stands"; then turning to me he said, "I will explain to you," speaking at first in English, but shortly afterwards using the French, remarking to me, "You understand that language?" He said in substance that Scott had throughout been a troublesome character, had been the ringleader in a rising against Mr. Snow, who had charge of the party employed by the Canadian Government during the preceding summer in road-making; that he had risen against the "provisional Government" in December last; that his life was then spared; that he escaped, had again been

taken in arms, and once more pardoned, referring, no doubt, to the promise he had made to me; that the lives and liberty of all the prisoners were secured, but that he was incorrigible and quite incapable of appreciating the clemency with which he had been treated; that he was rough and abusive to the guards and insulting to him, Mr. Riel; that his example had been productive of the very worst effects on the other prisoners, who had become insubordinate to such an extent that it was difficult to withhold the guards from retaliating.

He further said, "I sat down with Scott as we are doing now, and asked him truthfully to tell me—as I would not use his statement against him—what he and the Portage people intended to have done with me had they succeeded in capturing me when they surrounded Conture's house," to which he replied, "We intended to keep you as a hostage for the safety of the prisoners." I argued with Riel and endeavoured to show that some of the circumstances he had mentioned, and especially the last, were very strong reasons to urge why Scott's life should not be sacrificed, and that if, as he represented, Scott was a rash, thoughtless man, whom none cared to have anything to do with, no evil need be apprehended from his example. I pointed out that the one great merit claimed for the insurrection was that so far it had been bloodless, except in one sad instance, which all were willing to look upon as an accident, and implored him not now to stain it, to burden it with what would be considered a horrible crime. He exclaimed, "We must make Canada respect us!" I replied, "She has every

proper respect for the people of Red River, and this is shown in her having sent Commissioners to treat with them." I told him I had seen the prisoners some time back, when they commissioned me to say to their friends at Portage that they desired peace, and I offered to go to them again and reason with them should that be necessary. On this he said, "Look here, Mr. Smith, Mr. Scott, the representative, went to see the prisoners at my desire, and on asking them whom they would vote for as councillors, if they were permitted a choice outside of their own body, Thomas Scott came forward and said, 'My boys, have nothing to do with those Americans.'" And when I remarked, "This is really a most trifling affair, and ought not to have been repeated," he said, "Do not attempt to prejudice us against the Americans, for although we have not been with them, they are with us, and have been better friends to us than the Canadians." Much more was said on both sides, but argument, entreaty, and protest alike failed to draw him from his purpose, and he closed by saying, "I have done three good things since I have commenced: I have spared Boulton's life at your instance, and I do not regret it, for he's a fine fellow; I pardoned Gaddy, and he showed his gratitude by escaping out of the Bastion, but I don't grudge him his miserable life; and now I shall shoot Scott." Lepine, the Adjutant-General—who was president of the council of seven which tried Scott, five of whom, Riel told me, "with tears streaming from their eyes, condemned him as worthy of death," a sentence which he had confirmed—now entered, and in answer to

Riel said, "He must die." Riel then requested the Rev. Père Lestanc to put the people on their knees for prayer, as it might do good to the condemned man's soul. Referring to Père Lestanc, and making a final appeal unnecessary here to repeat, I retired. It was now within a few minutes of one o'clock, and on entering the Governor's house, Rev. Mr. Young joined me and said, "It is now considerably past the hour; I trust you have succeeded." "No," I said, "for God's sake go back at once to the poor man, for I fear the worst." He left immediately, and a few minutes after he entered the room in which the prisoner was confined some guards marched in and told Scott his hour was come. Not until then did the reality of his position flash upon poor Scott. He said good-bye to the other prisoners, was led outside the gate of the fort with a white handkerchief covering his head; his coffin, having a piece of white cotton thrown over it, was carried out. His eyes were then bandaged; he continued in prayer, in which he had been engaged on the way for a few minutes. He asked Mr. Young how he should place himself, whether standing or kneeling; then knelt in the snow, said farewell, and immediately fell back, pierced by three bullets, which had passed through his body. The firing party consisted of six men, all of whom, it is said, were more or less intoxicated. It has been further stated that only three of the muskets were loaded with ball cartridge, and that one man did not discharge his piece. Mr. Young turned aside when the first shots were fired, then went back to the body, and again retired for a moment, while a man discharged his

revolver at the sufferer, the ball, it is said, entering the eye and passing round the head.

The wounded man groaned between the time of receiving the musket shots and the discharge of the revolver. Mr. Young asked to have the remains for interment in the burying-ground of the Presbyterian Church, but this was not acceded to, and a similar request, preferred by the Bishop of Rupert's Land, was also refused. He was buried within the walls of the fort. On descending the steps leading from the prison poor Scott, addressing Mr. Young, said, "This is a cold-blooded murder"; then engaged in prayer, and was so occupied until he was shot.

After this date I held no communication whatsoever with Riel, except in reference to getting away from the country, which I was not allowed to leave without a pass. I felt that under the circumstances it was not desirable I should remain longer at Red River, but it was not until late on the night of the 18th inst. Riel gave permission for my departure. Although not accomplishing all that could have been desired, the mission to Red River, as I shall endeavour to show in a few words, has been productive of some good; and that it was not entirely successful may fairly be attributed to the circumstances above referred to, in connection with the action taken and meetings held in January last. Success, although in a lesser degree, might also have been gained at a later period, but for the rising in February, which, though rash and productive of results the most unfortunate, I can hardly blame, knowing, as already stated, that

those who took part in it were actuated and impelled by generous motives.

On reaching Red River in December last I found the English-speaking portion of the inhabitants greatly divided in opinion as to the comparative advantages of union with Canada and the formation of a Crown Colony, while a few, a very small number, favoured annexation to the United States. The explanations offered on the part of Canada they received as satisfactory, and with hardly a dissentient voice they would now vote for the immediate transfer to the Dominion. They earnestly requested me to assure His Excellency the Governor-General of their warm loyalty to the British Crown.

The case is difficult as regards the French half-breeds. A not inconsiderable number of them remained true to their allegiance during all the troubles through which they have had to pass, and with these will now be found associated many others whose minds had for a time been poisoned by gross misrepresentations made by designing men for their own selfish ends. A knowledge of the true state of the case and of the advantages they would derive from union with Canada had been carefully kept from them, and they were told to judge of Canadians generally by the acts and bearing of some of the less reflective immigrants who had denounced them as "cumberers of the ground," who must speedily make way for the "superior race" about to pour in upon them.

It is also too true that in the unauthorised proceedings

of some of the recent Canadian arrivals some plausible ground had been given for the feeling of jealousy and alarm with which the contemplated change of government was regarded by the native population. In various localities these adventurers had been industriously marking off for themselves considerable and in some ways very extensive and exceptionally valuable tracts of land, thereby impressing the minds of the people with the belief that the time had come when in their own country they were to be entirely supplanted by the stranger, a belief, however, which I have no doubt might have been completely precluded by the prevention of all such operations until Canada had fully unfolded her policy and shown the groundlessness of these fears.

Let us further bear in mind that many of the Catholic clergymen in the country are not French-Canadians, but Frenchmen, and consequently, it may be presumed, not very conversant with British laws and institutions and with the liberty and privileges enjoyed under them. Warmly attached to their flocks, they deemed it necessary to exact some guarantee that in their new political condition they would not be treated with injustice. It is unnecessary here to point out how the breach widened, until at length it attained a magnitude and significance little dreamt of in the commencement, even by those who joined most heartily in the movement. It is far more pleasing to be able to state, which I do with much confidence, that a large majority of the French party have no misgivings as to union with Canada, and that joined by and under the guidance of his lordship, Bishop Taché,

and other members of the clergy who enjoy their confidence, they will shortly prove themselves to be staunch supporters of the Dominion, firm in their allegiance to England.

In the course of the insurrection one deplorable crime and many grossly illegal acts have unquestionably been committed, but it would be alike unpolitic and unjust to charge them to the French population generally.

Much obloquy has been heaped on the Hudson's Bay Company and their Governor and officers in the North-West, which I consider it unnecessary at this moment even to attempt to answer or refute, although not doubting that both could be readily and satisfactorily done. Errors, many and grave, have, it cannot be denied, been committed on all sides, but wilful and intentional neglect of duty cannot, I feel convinced, be laid to the charge either of the Hudson's Bay Company or their representatives in the country. Personally I have been entirely unconnected with the administration of affairs in that department.

I would respectfully submit that it is of the utmost importance there should be a strong military force in the North-West as early as practicable. The minds of the Indians, especially the tribes in the Saskatchewan country, have been so perplexed and confused by the occurrences of the past six months that it would be very unsafe to trust to their forbearance; and, indeed, until the question of Indian claims has been finally settled, it would not, in my opinion, be prudent to leave the country unprotected by military. The adjustment of those claims will require

early attention, and some memoranda and evidence in my hands on the subject I shall, if desired, be prepared to lay before the Government.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

DONALD A. SMITH.

OTTAWA, 12*th April*, 1870.

THE HON. JOSEPH HOWE,
Secretary of State for the Provinces.

APPENDIX B

Commission issued to Donald Alexander Smith, Esq., Appointing him Commissioner

CANADA.

Victoria, by the grace of God, etc.,

To Donald A. Smith, of the City of Montreal, of the Province of Quebec, in the Dominion of Canada, Esquire, and to all others to whom the same be in anywise concerned, Greeting:

Whereas, by an Act of the Parliament of Canada passed in the thirty-third year of our Reign, intituled "An Act for the temporary Government of Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory, when united to Canada," it is recited that it is possible that we may be pleased to admit Rupert's Land and the North-West Territory into the Union of the Dominion of Canada before the then next session of the Canadian Parliament, and that it is expedient to prepare for the transfer of the said Territories, and that it is expedient to prepare for the transfer of the said Local Authorities to the Government of Canada, at this time appointed by us for the Civil Government of such Territories, until more permanent arrangements can be made by the Government and

Legislature of Canada, and it is by the said Act in effect enacted that our Governor may authorise and empower such officer as he may appoint as Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, and who shall administer the government as the said Act contemplated.

And whereas, in the preparation for the transfer of the said Territories, our Governor of Canada was pleased to send the Honourable William McDougall, the gentleman selected to be the Lieutenant-Governor as aforesaid, on its union with Canada, in advance and in anticipation of the union, and his entry into the said Territories was obstructed and prevented by certain armed parties who have declared their discontent and dissatisfaction at the proposed union and their intention to resist the same by force.

And whereas it is expedient that inquiry should be had into the causes and extent of such obstruction, opposition, and discontent, as aforesaid.

Now know ye, that having confidence in your honesty, fidelity, and integrity, we do, by these presents, nominate, constitute, and appoint you, the said Donald A. Smith, to be our Special Commissioner to inquire into the causes, nature, and extent of the obstruction offered at the Red River, in the North-West Territories, to the peaceable ingress of the Honourable William McDougall and other parties authorised by our Governor-General of Canada to proceed into the same; and also to inquire into the causes and discontent and dissatisfaction alleged to exist in respect to the proposed union of the said North-West Territories with the Dominion of Canada;

and further, to explain to the inhabitants of the said country the principles on which the Government of Canada intends to administer the government of the country according to such instructions as may be given to you by our Governor in Council in this behalf; and to take steps to remove any misapprehensions which may exist in respect to the mode of government of the same; and to report to our Governor-General the result of such inquiries and on the best mode of quieting and removing such discontent and dissatisfaction; and also to report on the most proper and fitting mode for effecting the speedy transfer of the country and government from the authority of the Hudson's Bay Company to the Government of Canada with the general consent of the inhabitants.

And further, to consider and report on the most advisable mode of dealing with the Indian tribes in the North-West Territories.

To have and to hold the said office of Commissioner for the purposes aforesaid unto you, the said Donald A. Smith, during pleasure. In testimony whereof, etc.

NOTE.—The foregoing document was not sent to Mr. Donald A. Smith until the 25th of January, 1870, although it was given under the Great Seal on the 17th of December. Mr. Commissioner Smith, however, acted on the letter of the 10th of December, which was, in fact, a Commission giving him the fullest authority to act according to the best of his judgment in dealing with the troubles at Red River. I have omitted the letter as being but a repetition.

APPENDIX C

LOUIS RIEL

Of the subsequent history of the celebrated half-breed agitator, there is little or nothing which directly concerns our narrative. In 1874, while still in exile, he was elected to Parliament as member for Provencher. He actually made his way to Ottawa, took the oath, and signed the roll. He then disappeared, and his expulsion was duly voted. In 1885, his ambition once more inflamed, Riel came out of his obscurity, provoked a rebellion in Saskatchewan, and was eventually hanged at Regina, in September, 1885.

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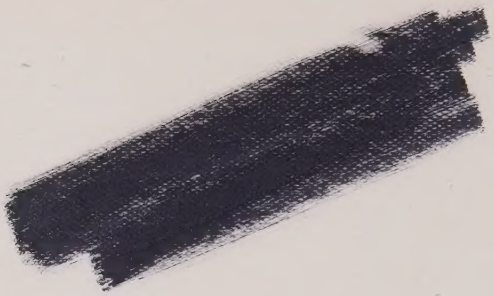

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